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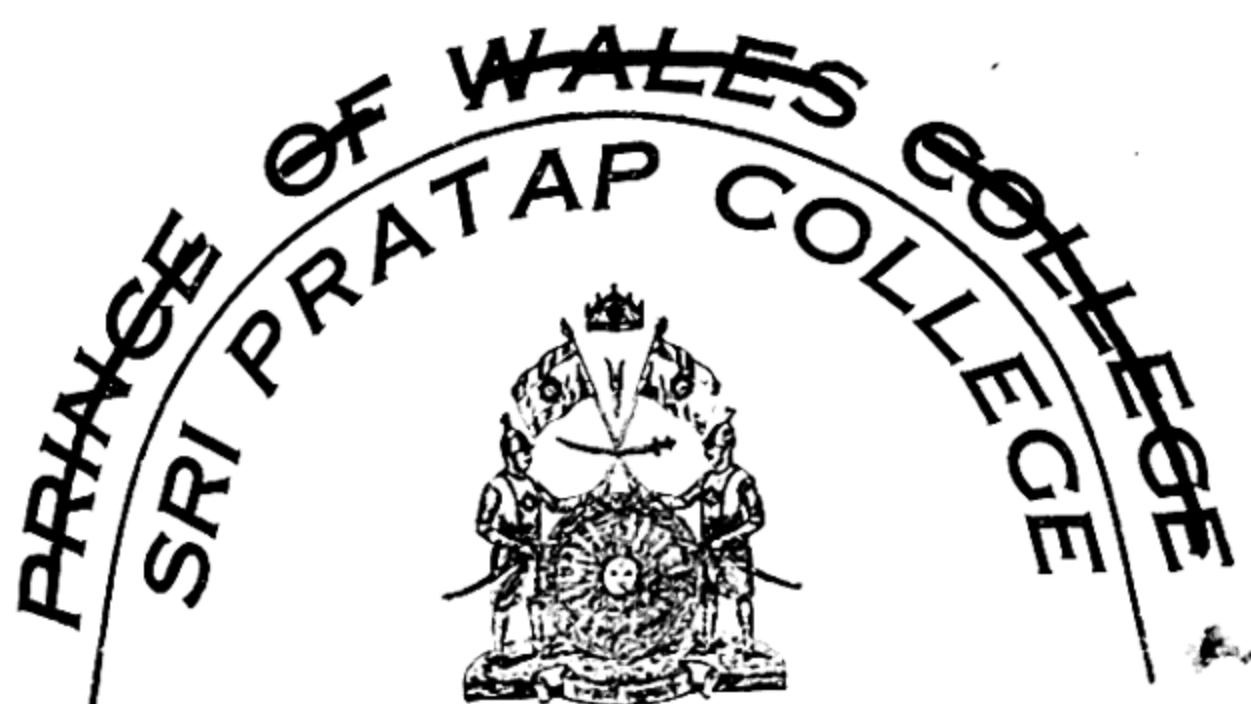
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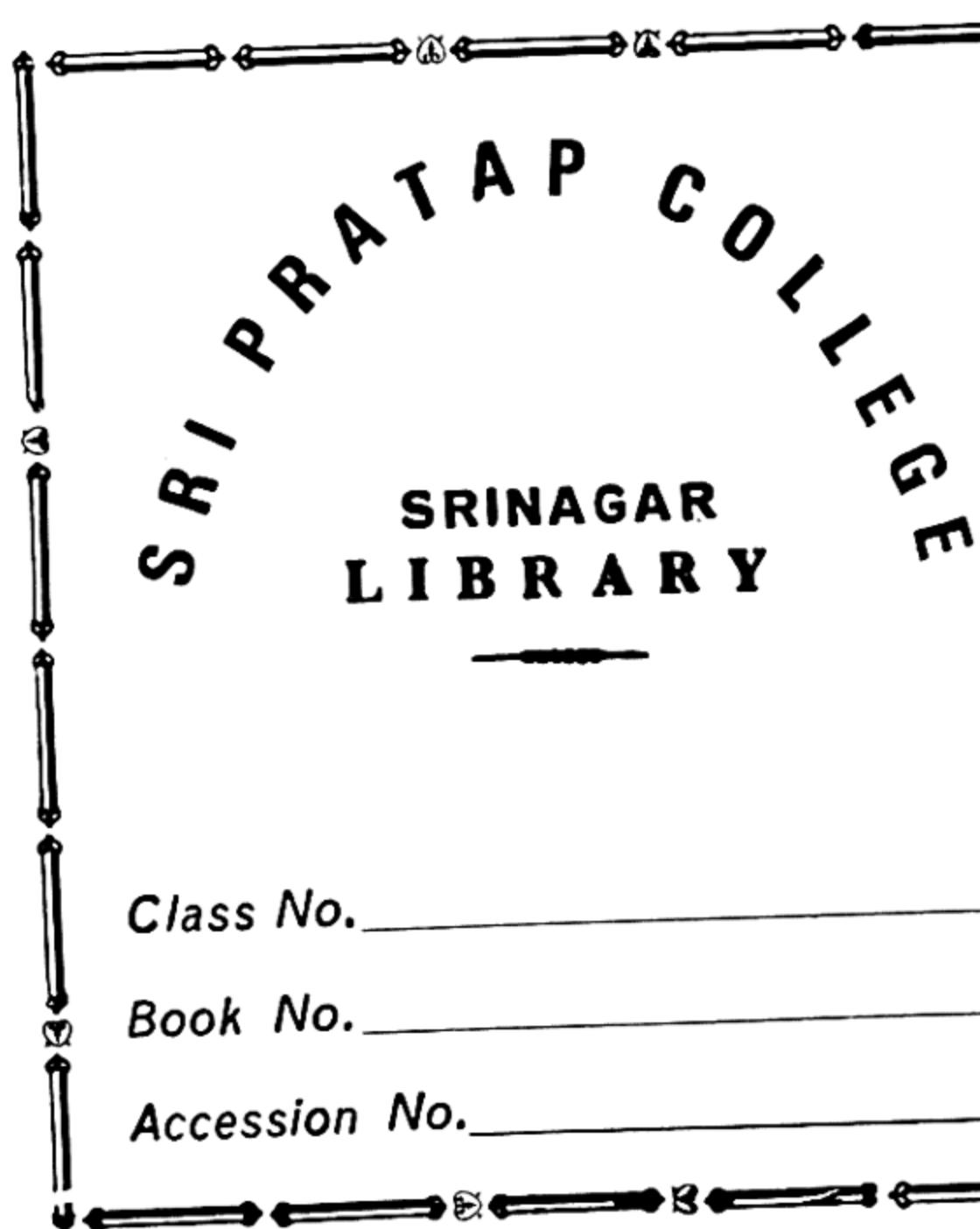
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# ...AND AFTER



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H. Dennis Bradley

# ...AND AFTER

BY

H. DENNIS BRADLEY

AUTHOR OF

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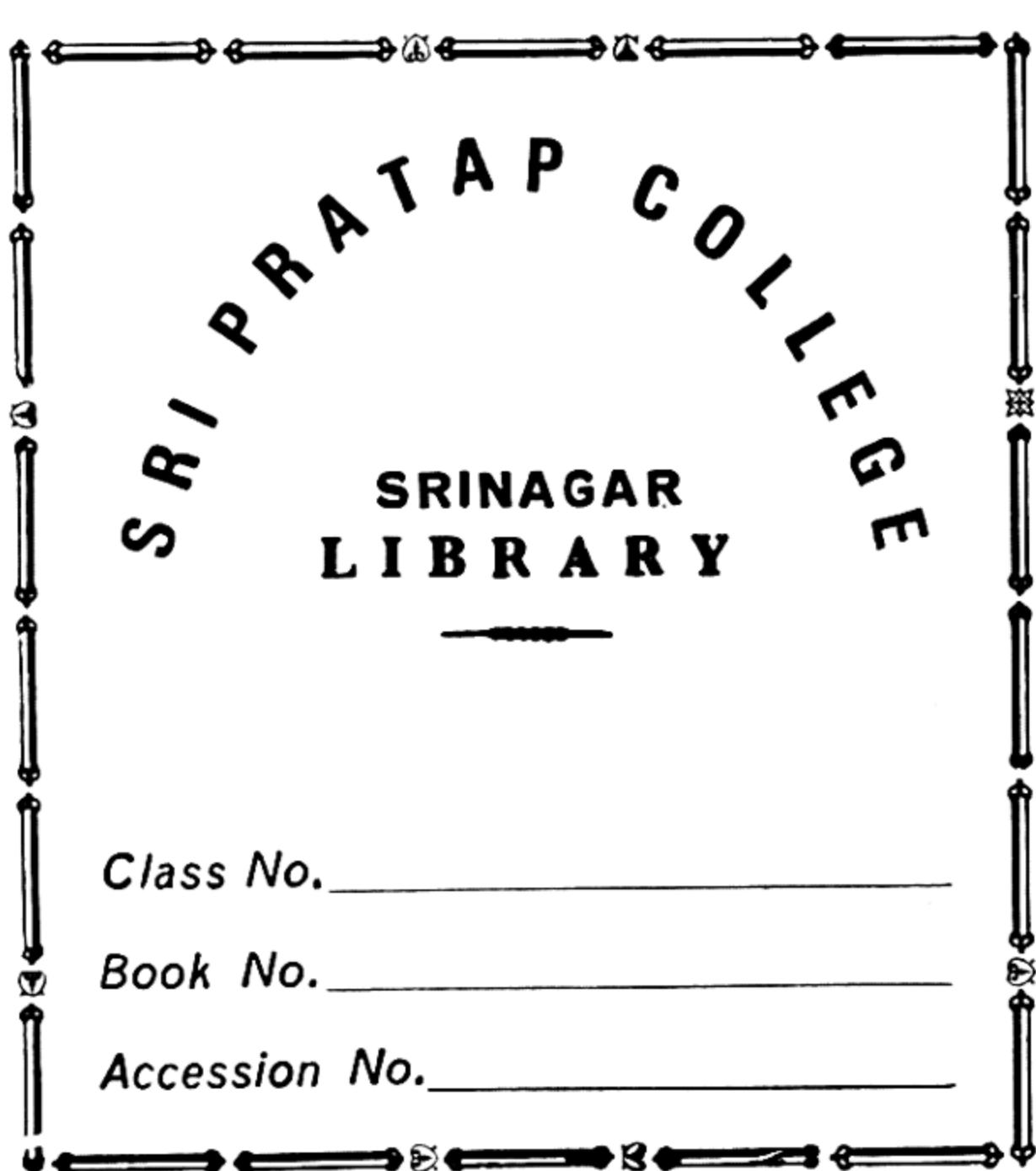
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SHRIATAP DOLLAH, L.  
SRINAGAR

## BOOK I

### SOME CLAIRVOYANT EXPERIMENTS

#### CHAPTER I

##### A RETROSPECT AND A REVIEW

*Embarkation—A retrospect—Success—Failure—Honesty—Fraud—Proof of survival—The greatest scientific discovery in history—How can it be proved?—The "direct voice"—George Valiantine—His record—The pinnacle of his mediumship—Physical phenomena—The voice from space—Personal experiments—Dangerous obsessions—"Boom" dangers—The charlatans—H. G. Wells' comments—Instinctive antipathy—Clairvoyant and clairaudient mediums—The golden rules—The genuine mediums—A test—Automatic writing—Conan Doyle—Rubbish from Australia—Prejudice and credulity.*

NECESSITY may be the mother of Invention, but, in her loose moments, she may also beget an unruly child called Circumstance. Her alliance with Destiny is, at times, promiscuous in the shaping of rough-hewn ends.

It was Circumstance that first led me to embark upon my studies on psychics. It is Circumstance that now compels me to renew in retrospect the result of those studies, and to disclose my deductions and inferences.

In the course of the last eight years I have made an exhaustive study of all forms of mediumship, and the earlier stages of that study were recorded by me in two lengthy volumes: "Towards the Stars," published in 1924, and "The Wisdom of the Gods," published in 1925. Since then, however, with the exception of a book written by me and translated into German, dealing with experiences in that country, I have not published any further work on psychics in England.

In this book I propose to record the salient features of my studies since 1925.

Although my perspective has, during this time, become infinitely clearer, when reviewing the experiences recorded in those two books I find that there is nothing which I desire to retract. These records narrated faithfully the facts that had occurred, without embellishment, and with a scrupulous regard for truth. It is interesting

to observe that in my second psychic book I remarked:  
“To arrive at wisdom the heights and depths of experience must be explored, and truth must be established, not upon myth, nor upon belief, but upon the solid foundation of knowledge.”

In the present book there will be found some of the “depths of experience.”

In this material existence human thought cannot sustain itself alone upon the heights, and so, as at various stages in his upward path the climber pauses and turns to survey from above the paths from which he has attained his present point, in this book I propose to survey those eight years’ intensive toil, and estimate the value of the results and rate the consequences.

There has been success, there has been failure; belief and disillusion; I have found honesty and fraud, avarice and self-denial, illusion and delusion, compensation and disappointment; and I propose to set down plainly my deliberate opinion of the value of the subject of psychics.

Humanity can never remain static; human thought and actions tend either to run to seed and decay, or to progress and develop more acutely.

The general object of my studies has been to gain incontestable proofs of the survival of man’s spirit after bodily death. For centuries man has considered this vast problem, which forms the basis of all religions, but his faith has, of necessity, been built upon belief, and not upon any foundation of scientific knowledge. That this study is worth while must be agreed, even by the most cynical materialist, for if man’s survival after death were scientifically proved, and this fact universally accepted, then such proof would represent the greatest scientific discovery in history.

The question that has tormented man’s mind throughout the ages, and torments the multitudes to-day, is the uncertainty of any existence after the brief spell of this life on earth. Hence, to scientists, philosophers, clerics, and ordinary men of the world, this leading question may be put: “How can survival be *proved?*”

It can only be proved by the establishment of communication with those who have lived on earth and have passed on to the next stage of their existence, and, if communication be once established, then the communicating spirits must give irrefutable evidence of their identities, of the retention of their memories as to events which happened in connection with their personal lives

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on earth, and their knowledge of the facts which are happening to those connected with them, who have remained on earth since they passed over. Even one such case, if definitely proved, would be of paramount importance to the world, but I would not venture to expect the majority of men to accept the fact of survival, unless, as a result of my own experiences in research work, I could assert without fear of contradiction that survival has been proved in hundreds of cases, and that I can personally call upon the testimony of hundreds of witnesses of international repute.

This twentieth century in which we are living has made enormous strides in material and scientific progress. It is the century in which man has essayed his first flight above the earth, has conquered space by the discovery of the ether waves, and has thrown his voice across continents; but the discovery of wireless pales into insignificance before the discovery of the greatest phenomenon of all time—the establishment of direct communication in the *actual personal voice* with those who are existing upon another plane than ours.

It is in no spirit of conceit that I lay claim to having given the rare form of the phenomenon of the "direct voice" greater study, and to have had more experiences and acquired a greater knowledge of the sensitive vibrations and intricacies than most men.

But for the fact that I and Mrs. Bradley succeeded in developing "voice" mediumship personally and individually, entirely apart from any outside or professional medium, I should not feel qualified to criticize analytically the extraordinary phases of the development and the eventual decline of the mediumship of George Valiantine.

Valiantine, at the height of his mediumistic powers, was, to my mind, the greatest "voice" medium the world has ever known. In view of the subsequent chapters in this book, a brief résumé of the records of his mediumship under my personal supervision, in my own house, may be given.

On the first occasion that Valiantine visited England, in 1924, he stayed with me at Dorincourt for five weeks. During this time I held twenty-eight "direct voice" séances. Of these, one was entirely unsuccessful, four might be regarded as negative in evidential results; the remaining twenty-three were remarkably successful.

In 1925 Valiantine stayed with me again at Dorin-

court, from February 13 until April 25, and during these ten weeks I conducted sixty-one séances. Only two of these were complete failures; five were what I should describe as negative in results, although phenomena occurred, and fifty-four were successful.

Valiantine visited me again in 1927, staying with me at Dorincourt, a few records of which are published in this book.

Up to, and including, 1927, I had conducted considerably over one hundred experiments with Valiantine, 95 per cent. of which were successful. Between two and three hundred people witnessed the phenomena which took place, the majority of whom were men and women of established reputation in various paths of life.

Valiantine has stayed with me for periods of months on end, and I have had ample opportunities of studying his character. He is a man of instinctive good manners, but it is essential to state that he is semi-illiterate. He possesses no scholastic education whatever, beyond the ordinary simplicities; he is ill-versed in general conversation and ideas. I mention these facts because many of the communications which have been made in the "direct voice" under his mediumship have been brilliant in their expressions and culture.

Fluent conversations have been carried on by various "voices" in nearly every language, and in many dialects. French, Basque, German, Spanish, Italian, Sicilian, Russian, Dutch, Danish, Portuguese, Arabic, Ancient and Modern Chinese, and idiomatic Welsh have all been spoken. Of the many hundreds of "voices" (feminine and masculine) which have spoken, the great majority possessed distinct character and individuality. The *timbre*, accent, and manner of delivery, and, beyond all, distinctive personality, were recognizable in innumerable instances. There was also a considerable number of cases recorded by me in which communicating "voices" gave valuable cross evidence of communications made by them at other sittings at which Valiantine was *not* present. There were also several cases of information given by "voices" of facts which were proved to be not only *outside the knowledge of the medium*, but *outside the knowledge of any of the sitters present in the circle*.

In 1925, I recorded a series of sittings held in full daylight, during which the closest observation of Valiantine's face was made, and many evidential com-

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munications were given by the various " voices " which manifested under these conditions.

A number of official sittings were held by representatives of the Society for Psychical Research, during which supernormal evidences were recorded in the Proceedings of the Society. It was established by corroborated evidence that Valiantine and a spirit voice were speaking simultaneously.<sup>1</sup> Una, Lady Troubridge, and Miss Radcliffe Hall were two of the representatives of the S.P.R. present, and referring to the daylight experiment, Una, Lady Troubridge, wrote, in the " Proceedings " : " I consider that this has established Valiantine in an exceptional way. "

During the year 1925, in my opinion, Valiantine's mediumship was at its pinnacle, and the complete records which were published by me at this time are unique in the history of psychic science.

During my early studies I deduced by common logic that " voice " mediumship is not an abnormality, but that it is a latent faculty which it should be possible to develop in a certain percentage of men and women. I determined to experiment for myself, and within a comparatively short time, after the first experiment in 1924, my wife and I succeeded in establishing communication in the " direct voice " with various spirits whom we had known on earth, and who had passed over.

In the course of the many personal experiments I have conducted, in addition to the various conversations which have taken place with spirit entities, the most remarkable physical phenomena have also occurred. These physical phenomena are of an extraordinary nature and they have been witnessed by a number of people of repute. I have had the instruments of an orchestra placed in the centre of my own study, with luminous paint covering them so that every movement could be seen instantly, and these instruments have been played by unseen forces in perfect harmony. Whilst operatic selections were being played upon the gramophone, they have been supernormally conducted with a luminous baton in a majestic manner.

Remarkable as these supernormal manifestations are, I would not advance them, or indeed any conceivable form of physical phenomena, as any proof whatever of the survival of the spirit. One cannot prove survival by any physical manifestations; it can be proved only by

<sup>1</sup> This has happened on innumerable occasions.

mental evidence, conveyed by the personality, memory, and personally-volunteered knowledge of the communicating spirits.

At the "direct voice" séances held in my own house, *without any outside medium being present*, dozens of spirits, unknown to me, but known to various of the sitters, have spoken in their own recognizable voices, and have given evidence of their surviving personality. Many of these records have been published, together with the testimony of the witnesses, who have written and published corroborative accounts of the proofs which were given, and the incidents which took place.

There can be no question of hallucination or hypnotic suggestion with regard to these voices. I have used every means to refute such a contention. I have held séances in my study, when several people have been present, and outside the door other people have been sitting listening to the communicating spirits, and, *on several occasions, the spirits, in loud tones, have addressed those outside the room, who recognized the identities of the voices of the spirits speaking.*

I have recorded important information given by a personally known "spirit voice" of matters and events completely outside the knowledge of anyone present in the room. Science cannot yet explain the phenomenon of a distinct and intelligent voice speaking from *space*, independently of the medium, or of any of the sitters. Can any telepathic theory explain the fact that such "voices" are able, upon certain occasions, to give information of value upon matters and events which are not contained, or previously registered, in the minds of those to whom these facts are given?

These personal voice experiments, under the mediumship of my wife and myself, have been conducted at odd intervals from 1924 until the present date. During the last few years I have conducted these experiments with the utmost privacy, because upon the last occasion these experiments became publicly known I was inundated with thousands of letters from all parts of the country, and, indeed, from all parts of the world, from persons pleading for the opportunity of sitting with me. Not only that, but each one of the many who sat with me would afterwards relate their experiences, with the consequence that dozens of other personal friends would also pursue me with requests. At one period I was put to the expense of engaging an additional assistant secretary to

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deal with this correspondence and attend to the incessant telephone messages.

There are penalties attached to psychic studies. It is a subject which creates an enormous and peculiar interest.

It is six years since I have written a book on the subject, but for a long period I received several hundreds of letters a week; letters from all parts of the globe, from University professors, scientists, doctors and students. These lengthy letters compelled explicit answers.

Even to-day, if I take a week or so's journey on the Continent, I return to a mass of accumulated correspondence which appals me. It disturbs one's life and one's work; and that is why I have determined to play no public part in future. I have resigned from all the various Psychic Societies to which I belonged, and any further studies I may make will be made in sanctuary, and for myself alone.

Of the personal survival of the spirit after man's bodily death I am convinced, but while we are living the preliminary stage in our existence on earth, it is necessary for our sustenance and our development to devote our energies more to our own individual mental progress than to our dreams, imaginations, and anxious anticipations in regard to the form of existence we shall lead in the next sphere to this. If, as a first principle, we study and help our fellow-creatures on earth, we shall have ample time in the hereafter to develop ourselves to our ultimate fruition.

If an obsession exists in the mind of any person with regard to his subsequent existence, to the exclusion and detriment of the life he is living on earth, then such a tendency may prove destructive to individual progress. That such an obsession exists among vast numbers of spiritualists I have had ample proof. There has been during the last few years a "boom" in the cult of spiritualism. With the vague carelessness of gossips I have been labelled a spiritualist. I detest labels. I am no more a spiritualist than I am a telephonist, or a wirelessist. I am no "ist" and I belong to no "ism." I have taken psychics as an interesting study, and particularly in regard to its bearing upon an after life. All that I desire is to be accepted as a student; not as a "cultist" nor as an "occultist." Only the extremist and the fool should be pigeon-holed.

During the last few years Psychical Research and

Spiritualism have become internationally popular subjects. It is inevitable that when the herd-like mind is attracted to a new sphere vulgar usages are made, and charlatans and demagogic figures thrust themselves forward to lead the mob in the rush towards a new Klondike. The avaricious surge in the van, and then one observes the signs of abuse and consequent decay.

The study of psychics has at present no place in exact science. I am an admirer of H. G. Wells, whom I know personally, and, apart from my psychic studies, he is an admirer of me. At least he has said so, passing on to me the bouquet of "brilliance." Wells is a genius; he is, in my opinion, the greatest living writer. I judge him not upon his imaginative fiction, but upon his fine political and psychological penetration. His vast capacity of imagination has inspired him to undertake super-human tasks; tasks beyond the human limitations. His "Outline of History" is a magnificent attempt. His "Science of Life" is a finely evolved superficial scamper. One admires the endeavour to circle the Universe within a nine months pregnancy of idea.

Wells, in his writings, toys with the subject of psychical research. He says that he was a member of the Society for Psychical Research for a year or so. I have been a member for many years, and if Wells imagined that he could gain any knowledge from being a member of this Society it would be as well to inform him that it would be as logical to take a cottage in the Isle of Man for the purpose of the study of Asiatics.

Wells quotes a certain fraction of my work in his "Science of Life," and refers to one Valiantine séance at Dorincourt, at which a personal friend of his, Rebecca West, was present. He cites an error which was made by a communicating "voice" which spoke to her. Wells is, I know, according to his philosophy, instinctively prejudiced against the idea of survival. The scientist must have no prejudices one way or the other. His attitude should be cold and impartial.

Wells refers in particular to one chapter in my book, but he omits to state that, *after this incident had occurred*, another "voice" spoke to Rebecca West. This "voice" purported to be that of her mother, who discussed certain matters which the daughter had to attend to in regard to her mother's affairs after the latter had passed over. In the course of this conversation

Rebecca West became very emotional. Why was she emotional if she was talking to an obvious fake or fraud? She should have been all the more severe and critical. The full details of the one sitting at which Rebecca West was present, to which he refers, Wells may not have read. He makes no reference whatever to the distinctly evidential communications made by supernormal "voices" to Mrs. Gordon Craig; neither is there any reference to the communications made in the "direct voice" to Susan, Countess of Malmesbury, who was also present at Dorincourt at this particular sitting.

Scientific criticism should be free from bias. The valuation of authenticated facts must be made irrespective of their cause and effect for good or evil, and irrespective of one's own individual philosophy or ideas.

Wells has merely flirted with psychical research in his "Science of Life," but it is a subject which cannot be dismissed with a butterfly kiss or a hasty curse. It would have been wiser for him to have left the subject entirely alone, unless he was prepared to deal with it more thoroughly than by the brusque quotation of one doubtful point, which I had provided him with, and by omitting to advance any logical explanation of other phenomena, recorded by me, which took place on this particular evening.

In the first part of this book I shall deal with some experiences with clairvoyant and clairaudient mediums. There are comparatively few fully developed, genuine mediums in the world. Of the various forms of mediumship, the charlatan is naturally inclined to take the form which is easiest, and the simplest method for the fake medium to adopt is clairvoyance. It is not necessary in this form to make any attempt at physical or objective phenomena. The medium merely talks through his or her own lips, and, when possessed of a certain astuteness, by fishing about for names and information—which are more often than not volunteered by the sitter—the medium is enabled, by vague and general references, to impose upon a considerable number of credulous inquirers. This type of spiritualistic charlatan is really more vicious than the silly professional fortune-teller and palmist. There are also a very considerable number of clairvoyant mediums possessing a modicum of genuine power, who, while they are not actually fraudulent, are so undeveloped that the results obtained through them are valueless. I

have had experiences with many of these types, and the majority of the alleged communications received are an insult to the intelligence.

There are certain golden rules which should be applied to all subjective psychic experiments, by which one can at once test the genuineness of the communications. Unless the communications given through the medium are *freely and spontaneously volunteered, and can be proved to be outside the knowledge of the medium, they are of no value.* This rule applies equally to communications given in the "direct voice" at sittings where objective phenomena also take place. When the medium starts to fish for information by asking questions of the sitter, in order to get a line to work upon, one may be safe in assuming that the medium is *not* genuine. The few good clairvoyant mediums practising in England are probably the best that are to be found. I would state unhesitatingly that Mrs. Osborne Leonard is the best clairvoyant medium in the world. In the whole of the series of sittings I have had with her, which have been published in detail in my previous books, the evidences given by the communicating entities were exceptional, and never once in the information given was her "control" confused. In the accounts of my sittings with Mrs. Leonard I have recorded innumerable instances of information given in regard to occasions and events entirely outside the knowledge of the medium or myself, which have afterwards been proved to be correct.

It has been said by critics that the one supreme and conclusive test of the value of spirit communication would be, if the spirit could give information and describe events not only not known to the medium or to the sitter, but *unknown to any living person.* I have personally experienced two or three such cases. One of these I will quote. At a sitting with Mrs. Osborne Leonard, the communicant (Warren Clarke, my brother-in-law) displayed a complete knowledge of incidents connected with the lives of his two daughters, Phyllis and Betty, after he had passed over, and gave a point of considerable importance when he said: "There is something wrong with one of Phyllis's toe nails. It is not growing in the right way." After the sitting we inquired from her governess as to whether anything was wrong with any of the toe nails, and she replied that they were quite all right. About three weeks afterwards, however, one of the nails developed a split and eventually

came off. This incident is certainly of scientific interest, because, trifling as it may appear, the point given was proved to be outside the knowledge of any living person.

Sittings with Mrs. Osborne Leonard are held in clear light—and all the communications are made through her own lips while she is in a condition of deep trance. At many of my sittings with her, however, I have heard for a considerable period of the time the communications made in an entirely *independent voice*, speaking about two or three feet away from her head. After the voice has spoken, "Feda," the control, has then repeated what has been said. Taking verbatim notes I have recorded in writing many of these "independent voice" communications *before* the control "Feda," speaking through the lips of Mrs. Leonard, has had time to repeat them. Such experiences are unique, as Mrs. Leonard is not a "direct voice" medium. It may perhaps be explained as a combination of my form of mediumship with hers.

At one of my sittings with Mrs. Leonard twenty-one specific statements were made by the communicating spirit upon matters completely beyond the medium's knowledge or mine. Many of these statements applied to the movements and actions of a certain person *at the actual moment* when the sitting took place. Not only were the *movements* described at synchronized time, but the *thoughts* of the person, who was at that time travelling, were correctly described. Other statements with regard to this person referred to events which had happened in the past.

This sitting took place in the morning, and I was fortunately able to check up these statements on the same evening. I had no knowledge whatever as to where this particular lady was, but on telephoning to her flat in London I was informed that she was travelling back from Paris that day, and was expected home in the late afternoon. Upon her arrival I invited her to dine with me at Dorincourt. Meanwhile, taking the twenty-one statements in order, I framed twenty-one carefully guarded questions in relation to these statements, so worded that they could be put to her in such a way that they would *not* obtain from her correct and intelligent replies, unless they indicated matters within her knowledge. I explained to her that I had reasons for putting a series of questions to her in what must appear to be a somewhat abrupt manner. The result was that *eleven* of

the statements made at the sitting were found to be an absolute confirmation of exceptional evidential value. Six of the statements were correct, but had no evidential value, and the remaining four were statements upon incidents which had escaped her memory. No telepathic theory could logically apply to any of the volunteered statements made by the communicating entity.

On this same evening, after dinner, a "direct voice" séance was held at Dorincourt, under the dual mediumship of my wife and myself, at which several persons were present. This séance was remarkable both for objective and subjective phenomena. Several "voices" manifested, and the communicating entity which had volunteered the twenty-one statements at the sitting with Mrs. Osborne Leonard in the morning, carried on further confirmatory conversations in the "direct voice" with the lady in question.

In addition to Mrs. Osborne Leonard, I have obtained good supernormal evidence in my sittings with Mrs. Barkell and Mrs. Scales. Mrs. Barkell maintains a fairly good level standard of evidence, which is usually clear-cut and genuine. With Mrs. Scales, who seldom sits professionally, I have, at times, obtained some brilliant results of a standard equal to that of Mrs. Leonard. At other times, according to the condition of her health, the results have varied in their value; but always have I found her absolutely genuine.

With Mrs. Garrett I have only had two sittings. At the first I obtained nothing whatever of an evidential nature, the communications being impersonal. The second sitting, held in company with several persons, was interesting to a certain extent, and a few of the communications purporting to come from the late Sir Edward Marshall Hall were intelligent, certain parts of which displayed a knowledge of his personal association with me, and of events which had occurred in the past.

Beyond these four clairvoyant mediums, the others with whom I have sat have been vague, incoherent and rubbishy. Several were absolute frauds; but one cannot convict these so-called clairvoyant mediums on a mere charge of incoherence. One meets so many incoherent persons in the ordinary course of life; the only method to adopt in self-protection is to ignore them.

Another form of mediumship is Automatic Writing. In rare cases some very remarkable evidences of survival

have been obtained, and occasionally some brilliant philosophical essays have been volunteered. The series of sittings which I held with Mrs. Hester Dowden, some of which are recorded at length in my previous books, were, to my mind, supernormal and remarkable. The literary expression, and the extreme rapidity with which the thoughts and ideas on intricate and psychological problems were evolved, may be judged as beyond the pace of the ordinary mind. Mrs. Hester Dowden has also, through her automatic writing, obtained many very remarkable communications of an evidential nature volunteered by various entities.

In this book I have published one instance of this, obtained at a sitting booked anonymously.

Mrs. Dowden, the daughter of Professor Edward Dowden, is an extremely clever and cultured woman. Her development has proved extraordinary, and as an automatic writing medium her powers are probably superior to any yet discovered.

Automatic writing is a form of mediumship immensely favoured by amateur mediums all over the world. It is a favourite and easy form of subconscious expression. I would estimate that 99 per cent. of these alleged supernormal writings are either nonsense, or merely represent a coloured impression of the mind of the writer. Personally, as a psychical researcher, I accept nothing as supernormal without confirmatory evidence. Unless this is forthcoming I refuse to accept any statement from such sources as emanating from a discarnate entity.

In a few private circles it is possible that genuine messages of a consolatory nature are obtained, which bring comfort and pleasure to the recipient, but the value of the majority of the alleged communications which have been published is utterly negligible.

Shortly after Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's death an Australian paper published communications purporting to come from him through a medium in automatic writing. In this script there was not one solitary point of evidence of identity. The subject matter was not only entirely uncharacteristic, but was expressed in extremely poor English. Pages of this rubbish were published, and the automatic writer then proceeded to state that Doyle had arranged to dictate a new detective story through the hands of this medium.

Doyle was a friend of mine, and when I received the paper in which these alleged communications were

published I cabled the editor saying that if this detective story was published as a posthumous Conan Doyle contribution to literature, in my opinion it would be regarded in England as an insult to his memory. It was *not* published, and I received a very courteous letter from the editor thanking me for my cable, and for the opinion which I had expressed.

After recording a section of my clairvoyant experiences, I shall, in subsequent chapters of this book, deal with the records and the study of the development of Valiantine's mediumship in 1927, in 1929 and in 1931.

Character, energy, mentality and power in human life either progress to fuller fruition or sink into decay.

I shall relate my psychic experiences in Germany and Italy, and deal with the fanatical prejudices of certain types of pseudo-researchers and also with the obsessed credulity of ecstatic spiritualists; neither of which types possesses the necessary cold and unbiased intelligence with which one should approach all psychical studies.

I shall analyse many cases of fraud, and illustrate the menace of the flagrant manner in which multitudes of credulous-minded persons are being imposed upon by certain degraded types of exhibitors at the present moment.

In my final chapter I shall weigh Psychical Research and Spiritualism in the balance, and express my individual judgment upon the effects for good or for evil.

## CHAPTER II

### A SITTING WITH MRS. OSBORNE LEONARD

The control "Feda"—An official sitting of the S.P.R.—Poor phenomena—The personality of "Feda"—A verbatim dialogue—Business references—James White's offer—S. G. Soal's psychic experiences—The telepathic theory—My father—Evidential statements—A good sitting—A strange personal experience—A business communication—I refuse James White's offer.

January 25, 1926.

THIS was the first sitting I held with Mrs. Osborne Leonard, since those recorded in my book "The Wisdom of the Gods," published in December, 1925.

Mrs. Osborne Leonard's chief control is "Feda." As recorded in my books, "Feda" has manifested in the "direct voice" on innumerable occasions at Dorincourt, both under the mediumship of George Valiantine and under my own and my wife's mediumship. During a very long series of séances Feda has given many remarkable evidential communications; not only through the mediumship of Mrs. Osborne Leonard, but also through the mediumship of others.

At an official sitting of the Society for Psychical Research held at Dorincourt on March 20, 1925, under the mediumship of George Valiantine, at which were present Una, Lady Troubridge, Miss Radcliffe Hall, Dr. V. J. Woolley and myself, representing the Society, the phenomena were comparatively poor, and, among the few voices which manifested, Feda was one. At this sitting it appeared to us that a certain mistake in manifestation had been made by Feda. (This particular sitting is recorded on pages 307-311 in "The Wisdom of the Gods.") After the sitting, Lady Troubridge had a sitting with Mrs. Osborne Leonard, and on questioning Feda in regard to the Dorincourt sitting, she (Feda) said that she had *not* made a mistake on the evening in question. Lady Troubridge then said to Feda that, rather than there should be any possibility of a mistake being made, it would be better if Feda did not endeavour to get through at these "voice" séances again. Lady Troubridge, in discussing the matter with me, offered the opinion that it was quite possible that it was not Feda

at all, but an entity representing Feda. This contention I could not accept, in view of the fact that Feda had been through on dozens of occasions, speaking in her own characteristic manner at the private "voice" sittings held under my own and my wife's mediumship. The personality of this voice was unmistakable, and had never varied. In addition to this, there is recorded an accumulation of cross-evidence obtained through Feda in the "direct voice," at sittings held quite apart from Mrs. Osborne Leonard, and of which Mrs. Leonard had no knowledge. These evidences were later confirmed by the Feda communications at sittings held under the mediumship of Mrs. Osborne Leonard, in her trance condition.

Lady Troubridge said that she thought Feda's voice, under Valiantine's mediumship, had a slightly American accent. With this I entirely disagreed, because Feda's voice, under Valiantine's mediumship, was exactly the same as the voice manifesting under my own and my wife's mediumship.

At the sitting I am now recording, which commenced at 10.45 a.m. at Mrs. Leonard's house in Kenley, Surrey, the medium went into trance after a few minutes, and Feda gave the usual greeting. The communications which came through were nearly all in the first person. They are therefore published from my verbatim notes in dialogue form.

H.D.B. (*to Feda*): Were you present, speaking in your own voice, at the last Valiantine sitting?

FEDA: Yes. Yes, I was.

H.D.B.: Lady Troubridge told me that she thought your voice had an American accent.

FEDA: I don't know how it sounded, but it was my voice speaking there.

H.D.B.: You know that on one evening—the S.P.R. sitting—a mistake appeared to have been made?

FEDA: I remember that the conditions appeared to be mixed.

H.D.B.: Why is it that you have so seldom manifested in the direct voice since then?

FEDA: The Guides said it was better not to come. You know there were awful arguments.

(Here Feda said that Warren (Warren Clarke) was present.)

WARREN (*after greeting us*): When you are sitting, Herbert, you are apt to get cross with people. You get

boiling. I know it is necessary to have calm vibrations, but phlegmatic people do not get much power, and it is because of the wrong vibration with these people that other things go wrong.

H.D.B.: Would you advise Mabel and I to sit again for the "voices"?

WARREN: I don't want you to sit until later on. You are too much occupied with business, getting things ship-shape, and while your mind is occupied with these affairs, your aura is charged with them.

H.D.B.: Do you know that I have recently had a very big offer made to me? What is your opinion of it?

WARREN: In some ways I am favourable to it. It will take a good deal off your shoulders; it will mean a lot of work for you to do, but it would leave you free from all financial responsibility.

H.D.B.: But I should not feel personally free, since I should have no independence of action.

WARREN: But you know it is essential to concentrate on business.<sup>1</sup>

H.D.B.: You know Dennis (Dennis Anthony Bradley) is now helping me in business?

WARREN: Yes. But it will take a little time for him to get used to things. You don't want to mix up business with psychics. At present you have too much to do. A little later on you may take up psychic work again. A few months may make a difference, but you are not to sit just yet. I am not saying this just merely to buck Mabel up.<sup>2</sup> When you are developing voice mediumship it means that you are building up mentally, bit by bit, painfully. You are using certain forces and at times it does play "Old Harry." With "voice"

<sup>1</sup> The above refers to a very big business offer made to me by the late Mr. James White, on behalf of an important syndicate. I was offered £100,000 in cash for certain interests and my services as Managing Director at a salary of £10,000 per annum, and sharing profits calculated to amount to £20,000 a year. Big as this offer was, and infinitely beyond my own estimation of my value, eventually I turned it down. It would of course have meant that I should have been left with not one minute free in life, had I accepted it. James White was in the habit of dealing with huge figures. A little later on, as is well known, after dealing in millions he became bankrupt and committed suicide. Had I accepted his offer I should not have been in any way involved, because his offer to me was backed by firm securities, and was made in conjunction with a famous multi-millionaire, who died some five years later.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Bradley is not particularly keen on sitting for personal "voice" mediumship as she always feels extremely exhausted for a few days afterwards.

sittings the phenomena are very difficult and sensitive. You can never feel sure enough, and sometimes one can get disturbances even with the most sympathetic people. It is a great work and a splendid work to do, as it has given hope to thousands.

H.D.B.: Do you know that S. G. Soal has written a report on his psychic experiences, in which he records that at a "direct voice" sitting, he spoke with an entity who gave certain so-called evidential manifestations of his identity under the mediumship of Mrs. Blanche Cooper, and it was afterwards discovered that the purported entity was alive? Soal accounted for this on the telepathic theory. It seems quite an important point. What do you think of it?

WARREN: Of course the majority of communications have their origin from our side. That is what séances are held for, but certain people on earth have faculties which they should be careful *not* to use, consciously or unconsciously. This faculty draws the power for communication from earth instead of from our side. Communicating on your ground and conditions is a very subtle, delicate operation. Telepathy can operate on earth. Sometimes easier than from our side. Probably Soal had the information subconsciously within him.

Warren then went on to say that the Society for Psychical Research had given too much prominence to this particular paper, especially as there was no corroborative evidence whatever of the statements made. A little later on he said that man was a spirit on the earth, and that I (H.D.B.) could, under certain conditions, go to Valiantine and communicate with him. There was such a thing, he said, as projection of the spirit.

H.D.B.: You know, Warren, we have heard a lot about a great upheaval. What is your opinion?

WARREN: There is going to be one. Doyle has written a lot about it, but it is not as bad as people think. It will be much more of a spiritual and mental nature; connected with the elements. When our Lord was going to pass over, history records that there was a darkening period.

There will be great manifestations from our side. You will be able to see and hear us. There will be a great effort to show the world once and for all that we do exist. The ordinary people will get glimpses. You will perhaps have been sitting in the morning and find

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people talking to us. It will be a great blessing. If I stood in front of you, you would be delighted; there will be one great force of power. It will be a happy and glorious time for those who understand. You will have to go out and explain to the multitude, and take fear away from them. You will be among the teachers. It will be a wonderful time. It will come before you get old. Dennis (my son Dennis Anthony Bradley) will be in it strongly. He (Dennis) gets worried about his own Church. He should stick to his Church and the best of our teaching.

H.D.B.: What about Pat? (My younger son.)

WARREN: Pat is highly strung. He should be taught very carefully as a protective thing. Annie is looking after him. Don't discuss psychics too much in front of him. Keep him normal.

M.E.B.: Pat has not been very well lately.

WARREN: He will grow out of it. He has a delicate stomach. At present it would be much better for him to have a governess. Let him get stronger first. The membrane of the stomach is very sensitive. He might have a condition bordering on colitis. You must be careful of congestion by using anything too drastic. Paraffin oil would be the safest thing at present. Let Pat have plenty of orange juice. He will grow out of this condition.<sup>1</sup>

After this there was a long discussion with Warren regarding various personal matters; all questions were answered intelligently although they were of no particular evidential value. During this conversation Warren Clarke gave an exceptionally good description of a certain friend of George Valiantine's, who was visiting England. His analysis of this character was absolutely correct. He went on to say that if, at a later date, we continued our own personal "voice" sittings they would develop even better than Valiantine's. There was more actual force of a variegated kind, and more ground to work upon. The mediumship was a mutual thing. Both M.E.B. and H.D.B. could develop individually, and if one died the other could go on linking up. He stated that Cecil Husk and John King would be helping with the "voice" mediumship.

H.D.B.: Warren, have you had any news of Grandpa?

<sup>1</sup> There did exist in Pat, who was nine years of age at this sitting, a certain weakness. A year or two later the cause was discovered and he was operated on for appendicitis.

(I asked this question in these exact words purposely to disguise the actual name, in order to see if I could obtain a really evidential statement.)

WARREN: I have been looking after him. When he came over to this side he did not want to rest very much. He is always "up with the lark." He is very inquisitive, and noses into everything. He is very proud of himself, and both active and lazy. He is tremendously interested in meeting people he used to know and like when he was on your side. He likes to talk to them and conjure up wonderful pictures of what he used to do when he was on earth.<sup>1</sup>

M.E.B.: Are you still studying light and sound, Warren?

WARREN: Yes—I am learning how the wave lengths of light and sound alter when they come on to your plane. Yours shorten—ours lengthen. It is very difficult to measure distance, for distance is not always the same. When you understand our lower floor you will have drawn nearer to our plane. The place between will shrink. Thoughts correct. It is nearer now than ten years ago. Ours is solid planet; but more spiritual than yours. We walk on material ground; we do not live on mental condition only, but our matter is more refined than yours.

Here the sitting was closed.

The sitting, on the whole, may be taken as a good one. I have only given an abbreviated account of this sitting, but the fluency of the answers to the various questions was marked.

Warren's references to the personal "voice" sitting held by Mrs. Bradley and myself were interesting, especially the statement, "You are using certain forces, and at times it does play 'old Harry.'" There is no question that these sittings do have an exhausting effect, and that is the reason I have not been particularly desirous of continuing them.

Warren's reference to an "upheaval," however, was somewhat vague. For a year or so before, and after, the period of this sitting, various alleged spirit communications were coming through all over the world, prophesying that there would be an upheaval within the next few

<sup>1</sup> When I used the term "Grandpa" I was referring to my father, who had passed away the previous year. The references made by Warren Clarke were certainly indicative of his character.

years. In some cases the date was given as 1928. I know that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle received many such messages from various channels, and he appeared to be impressed by them. No upheaval of the character forecasted has taken place.

The reference to Dennis and the Church were quite correct, and the references made to my young son, Pat, were also entirely correct.

When I asked a question regarding the big offer that had been made, I gave no indication of what this offer was, and the reply given at once indicated a knowledge of what was referred to, and it was discussed in further detail.

One of the strangest incidents I have ever experienced in my life occurred in connection with this business offer. During the time negotiations were proceeding, I had one morning attended a meeting at Mr. James White's offices, which lasted two hours. I was accompanied by my solicitor, who was advising me, and watching my interests. There were present about a dozen men in all; financiers, accountants, etc. The whole of the time was occupied in financial questions, and various important figures were submitted, checked and re-checked. All these figures would have affected me very considerably personally. When the meeting had ended, my solicitor and I had tentatively agreed to pass these figures. Afterwards we lunched together at the Savoy Hotel, and discussed them again at length.

Strangely enough, that evening when I was alone in my room, changing for dinner, and thinking about entirely different matters, a "voice" coming from space in the middle of the room, suddenly called out, in distinct tones: "Take down these figures." The "voice" was objective, by which I mean, it was not clairaudiently heard. It could have been heard by anyone within radius, or recorded on a gramophone record. I did not even know, or think, at the moment, what the "voice" could mean by this remark. However, hurriedly taking a sheet of paper, I took down three sets of figures which were called out loudly and distinctly. The "voice" ended by saying: "Compare these very carefully," and then disappeared. I knew at once that the figures referred to that morning's meeting, and, on comparing them with the sheets of notes I had taken, I found that my solicitor and I had both omitted a certain important point in the agreement of terms which had been overlooked at the

meeting, and which would have meant a difference to me of £30,000. I at once telephoned to my solicitor, but he was out. I was able, however, to speak to his partner, who is his brother, and I read out the figures to him exactly as I had taken them down, and asked him to be sure and place them in front of his brother the first thing in the morning. When he received the message he rang me up and said that it was quite extraordinary how we had overlooked the point. I may mention that the £30,000 was afterwards agreed to by Mr. James White.

Eventually, entirely on my own initiative, and apart from the advice of my consultants, I refused the Managing Directorship. I wrote to Mr. White, acquainting him of my decision, and when I saw him he seemed to be enormously surprised, and asked me to reconsider my decision. He said: "Don't you realize, Bradley, we are offering you the equivalent of half a million of money?" I told him that, if I accepted, it meant I should be compelled to devote my whole life to the undertaking, and that there were certain things I wished to do, which I valued more than money. I believe he thought I was mad.

I do not wish to imply that I disregard the value of money; I am not a wealthy man, and usually only earn sufficient for my needs and mode of life. I have never been ambitious to accumulate riches, and I should not have recorded this incident but for the phenomenal occurrence of the "voice" speaking to me, and dictating to me some intricate figures which both I and my advisers had overlooked.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MEDIUMSHIP OF MRS. BARKELL

*Mrs. Barkell—I am obviously known to her—Names volunteered—Some correct information—References to matters outside the medium's knowledge—A second sitting—A curious incident—Levitation?—A third sitting—An evidential question—Genuine clairvoyant powers.*

#### I

October 28, 1926.

MRS. BARKELL is a professional clairvoyant medium, and for a considerable period held sittings at the British College of Psychic Science. I had heard various good accounts of her mediumship, and it was on the recommendation of Mrs. Gavin (who, at a certain sitting, had received communications purporting to emanate from my sister, Annie) that an appointment was made for me at Mrs. Barkell's private house at Beckenham.

The sitting took place at 11.30 a.m. in daylight, with the curtains of the room partly drawn.

It had been arranged previously between Mrs. Gavin and myself that she should accompany me, and sit with me during the first part of the séance; retiring later to allow me to continue alone.

I was introduced to the medium by name; therefore it is fair to assume that I was known to her, and that she had read my books on psychical research.

Within two or three minutes Mrs. Barkell went into trance, and her control, "White Hawk," spoke in deepish tones.

The control always refers to the medium as "my coat." He greeted me by shaking hands, and saying: "My coat does not believe—she does not believe in spirits." (Mrs. Barkell, in chatting to me after the sitting, told me that she herself could not feel assured as to whether they were spirit entities which manifested or not.)

"White Hawk" told me there were two ladies present who wanted to talk to me. One was "Lady Annie" (in previous sittings with Mrs. Gavin, "White Hawk" had always referred to my sister as "Lady Annie") and

the other a lady she had brought with her—one she loved, and who had not left the body long. (This might be taken as a reference to my mother, who had died a few weeks before this particular sitting took place.) "White Hawk" also referred to "Georgie," volunteering the name (my sister's son), whom, he said, was "part of Lady Annie's self."

The conversation continued as follows:

WHITE HAWK: Annie says she does not altogether like the book you are writing now. She is disappointed—she wanted you to write a work on the philosophy of spiritualism. She is bothered about someone who is sick; she had hoped that at the beginning of the summer she might have become stronger. She is talking of Gertrude (*the name was volunteered*) who has not been very well for a long time.

The sitting had by now proceeded for ten minutes, and "White Hawk" then spoke to Mrs. Gavin, saying: "Go away, Lady Peggy." Mrs. Gavin then left the room.

WHITE HAWK (*continuing*): I get a feeling of intense emotion from Annie. She has helped you: she is bringing an old friend of hers to England soon. This friend was the first "doorway."

(*This may possibly refer to Valiantine, through whom I received the first communication from Annie. Valiantine visited England again three months after this sitting took place.*)

WHITE HAWK: Mabel has been very tired lately. There is a feeling of lassitude. (*Name volunteered and information correct.*) Tirra Wella is one of your Guides. (*I have never heard of Tirra Wella either before or since.*) Annie says that mother is with her. She was so surprised and astonished when she passed over; just like a child. She was conscious at the end. She was only ill for a few days. She looks much younger—as the picture which was taken of her when she was forty to forty-five. She is very happy. At first it was overwhelming to her. She says: "Poor Gertie." It is too late. (*My sister died two years afterwards in 1928.*)

H.D.B.: Will you ask Annie the nature of the work I am engaged upon at present?

WHITE HAWK: Annie says you are writing on sex. She says sex is not ugliness. It is the forerunner of life. Sex can be perfectly beautiful; yet it can become sordid. Over here one is free from that sordid sensuality. There

is the sudden awakening of the soul, and we arrive at our higher selves. There is regeneration, which purges away all the lower type of mentality. It is the finding of the jewel—God's divine gift.

A little later in the sitting White Hawk told me that Warren was there. Among other things, I asked if Warren knew of the new book I was writing, and White Hawk continued.

WHITE HAWK: Warren says "it will make them sit up. It will show people in their true colours. So many things are hidden, but the portrayal of people as they really are will make for purity. This book will surpass anything you have done. It seems to me that you are showing the skeleton in fine clothes. First of all you are dressing them up, and then later you are showing them up. You are treating it with the method of the light jest—in the manner of Congreve. Tell Dorothy 'I don't mind—good luck to her.' "

The sitting lasted for an hour and a half, and I have given only a few brief extracts of what transpired.

The communications were not particularly evidential, but, at the same time, they were quite fluent throughout. The communicants appeared to have a certain knowledge of my personal thoughts and work, which were unknown to anyone but myself. The names which were volunteered could, of course, quite possibly be known by the medium on account of my published works.

At the time of this sitting I was engaged in writing "The Natural State," and the references made in regard to this book were most certainly outside the knowledge of the medium.

## II

*January 17, 1927.*

On this date I had my second sitting with Mrs. Barkell:

After the medium had gone into trance, the control "White Hawk" greeted me, and then referred to Valiantine's coming visit to England. The references he made were quite circumstantial, but I am bound to say that they might certainly have been within the medium's knowledge.

Communications purporting to come from Warren Clarke, in reply to questions put regarding certain

personal matters (which could not have been within the knowledge of the medium) were given through in a reasonable and correct manner.

Warren seemed to know the particular section of the book upon which I was working at that moment. He also volunteered the statement that he had been with me at Dorincourt, and had seen "the marionettes in the theatre." This may be regarded as an evidential point, as, just at that time, I had received from Mr. Charles Sykes a tiny model theatre, with the stage all set, and several little carved figures, representing the various characters in the play which I proposed to write.

Just prior to this particular sitting I had gone to my study one evening immediately after dinner, with the intention of devoting the evening to drafting out points for an essay on certain phases of the Chinese philosophy. It is my usual custom before writing to make short notes of the construction, containing salient features of the subject I am at work upon. In the ordinary course, on a rather unusual study, this construction would entail, at the very minimum, an hour's work. Strangely enough, directly I sat down I was able to construct the entire points and incidents of this essay in two minutes. These notes, which were of considerable value to me, I placed on a stool, on the top of a few other sheets of notes, on the right of the armchair in which I usually do my writing. I then left the room for less than one minute, to fetch some other papers from my dressing-room, and on my return the notes had disappeared. I searched everywhere, but could not find them. No one had entered this room during my few seconds' absence. I interrogated the servants, but not one had been near my room; neither were they, having received explicit instructions, likely in any circumstances to touch any of my papers. I spent over an hour in fruitless search, and was then compelled to re-draft my notes from memory, which entailed nearly two hours' work. The disappearance was inexplicable.

I therefore asked "White Hawk" if he could tell me anything regarding the disappearance of some Chinese notes. White Hawk replied, saying: "You had attracted a man of China, who is well up in all the laws appertaining to the levitation of objects and voice phenomena. Because your mind was running in a groove it was easy for him to manifest. The notes which were taken will be given back." All these points were

volunteered. The "book test," however, failed: "They were drawn from the right-hand side of where you were sitting at home—near the bookcase. He came and took them when you were not looking. You remember you had them practically under your hand. You will find those notes again. Look in your bookcase—near the textile book—you will find one there with dark red bindings and gold lettering on the cover. It is in a most unusual place. You will find the paper there. You need not make a systematic search. You will find it when you are looking at books not connected. When you find the paper there is placed on it some Chinese hieroglyphics—Lao—Tze—Tien." A little later on White Hawk repeated: "Lao—Tze—Tien—Wisdom of the East—Fount of Wisdom."

The references made by White Hawk in regard to the position in which I sat at home, with the bookcase on my right, is quite correct, and this fact was certainly not within the knowledge of the medium. The description of the exact position from which the "notes" had disappeared—"from the right-hand side . . . at home . . . near the bookcase. . . . You remember, you had them practically under your hand. There are one or two textile books in one particular portion of this bookcase," is also correct, but although I made a thorough search afterwards in all the sections I could not discover the missing paper; neither have I discovered it to this day.

### III

August 23, 1928.

The sitting was held at Mrs. Barkell's house in Beckenham.

A minute or so after she had gone into trance, the control, "White Hawk," came through and spoke, giving the usual greeting.

He then referred to a recent birth in Warren's (Warren Clarke) family.

*This is quite correct, but could, of course, be within the knowledge of the medium.*

After a short time, the communications purporting to emanate from Warren Clarke came through in the first person. We conversed for some few minutes and then, suddenly, the following was volunteered:

**WARREN:** How do you like the turret room?

*This question was distinctly evidential. A week or so prior to this sitting Warren Clarke's wife, Dorothy, was staying with her three children and their nurse with my family at Dorincourt. While they were there I changed from my usual bedroom and occupied a room in a small tower annexed to the house. The rooms in this tower are always referred to as the turret rooms.*

Warren Clarke referred to his two children, Phyllis and Betty, volunteering their names, and speaking of various little trifling domestic incidents which had just previously occurred. He then went on as follows:

**WARREN:** You were a bit irritable at having to change your room. Your language was not parliamentary or polite. You have all my sympathy. (All of this was said jokingly and in the best of good humour.) I wonder they don't put you outside. Tell Mabel the next time she should erect a tent for my family and the step family.

*All the above may be regarded as distinctly evidential. His references to his wife and his two children, and their step-brother, were all entirely correct.*

After this, "White Hawk" said that "Lady Annie" (my sister) was present. The communications which followed came through in the first person.

**ANNIE:** We have been preparing a reception for Gertie. You know, before she passed over, right down in her soul she was not quite sure. Over here it is quite different to what one expects. After she had passed over, and we met her, it was difficult to make her understand the reality of it all. The passing was not so terrifying as she had anticipated.

Here "White Hawk" intervened, saying that Gertie (my sister) was present. He told me that she was holding in her hands roses and carnations. And then continued:

**WHITE HAWK:** Gertie says: "Did you send roses, lilies and carnations to her funeral?" (*This was an evidential communication.*) She says she saw Annie waiting for her. Annie can fulfil her promises. Gertie sends her love to Edward.<sup>1</sup> She says she will soon communicate with him. There is an understanding.

Here White Hawk said that Gertie looked older than Annie. (My sister Gertrude passed over at a much later age in life than my sister Annie.)

<sup>1</sup> The name Edward (her husband) was volunteered.

Gertie says she was so delighted to meet her mother again. (Her mother passed over two years previously, and she had for many years lived with Gertie.) When she came over first she was so afraid of waking. She says: "Will you ask Edward if he has a brother in spirit, because she has met him." (*I did not know whether this was correct, but later ascertained that it was so, and that he had died many years before. A volunteered fact outside the knowledge of the medium or the sitter.*)

Here several communications came through from Warren Clarke regarding the literary work upon which I was then engaged. I do not regard it as necessary to quote these communications verbatim, but they certainly displayed a very distinct and personal knowledge of matters of which I alone knew. During the conversation replies to questions were given quite naturally and intelligently. The conversation was carried on in the first person.

Towards the end of the sitting White Hawk said: "Lady Annie is full of Lady Gertie. She was so astonished and nervous of waking up. When she woke up over here she thought it was a dream, and she was so afraid of waking up and finding herself again in pain." (My sister Gertie died of tuberculosis after a long and terribly painful illness.)

WHITE HAWK (*continuing*): Gertie says she can hardly understand it all—being able to talk. She says: "Is it really Herbert?"

WARREN CLARKE: Well, you could hardly call him a dream. (*Humorously delivered.*)

After this there were a few more communications from Warren Clarke in regard to business and literary matters, concerning myself, and also a few messages sent to my son Pat, and various members of the family.

The sitting then closed.

In summarizing my experiences with Mrs. Barkell I must express the opinion that she has genuine clairvoyant and clairaudient powers, and that it is possible to obtain from her mediumship considerable personal information of an evidential nature, which one can prove to be entirely outside her knowledge.

## CHAPTER IV

### AN EXPERIMENT WITH MRS. GARRETT

*An unwise procedure—Sir Edward Marshall Hall—A long conversation—Lord Dewar—Lord Birkenhead.*

December 8, 1930.

ON this date I was invited by Mrs. C. A. Dawson Scott (founder of the International P.E.N. Club) to attend a sitting with Mrs. Eileen Garrett, a clairvoyant and clairaudient trance medium.

The sitting took place at Mrs. Dawson Scott's house in Maida Vale, where she had been holding a short series of sittings under the mediumship of Mrs. Garrett.

These sittings were usually held in the presence of about a dozen or so people, and Mrs. Dawson Scott informed me that on certain occasions very good results had been obtained, with evidence of the surviving personalities of certain well-known characters.

Prior to this, she told me that at the last sitting held they had asked the "Control" if, at the next meeting, they could bring through communications from the late Sir Edward Marshall Hall, and as I had known him in life, they asked me to be present.

Frankly I thought it rather an unwise procedure to request the "Control" of a medium to bring through a certain entity at a subsequent meeting, because this obviously affords the medium the opportunity of acquiring information beforehand.

The sitting I attended was held in full artificial light, and there were about a dozen sitters, including three or four well-known writers. Shorthand notes were taken by a friend of Mrs. Dawson Scott's, and the following is a verbatim account:

CONTROL: It is I . . . Uvani. I give you greeting, friends. Peace be with you, and in your life, and in your heart. Madame, I give you greeting (*to Mrs. D.S.*). You asked me to bring a certain legal gentleman. I think you flatter me, Madame, if you think I can give you the thoughts of this gentleman who has a very

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brilliant knowledge of English. Is it not so? He is willing to come here, and anything I cannot understand in his speech with you, will you please forgive me if I have to get Mr. McKenzie's help?

MRS. D.S.: The legal gentleman will see there are men here who are old friends of his.

CONTROL: He says he cannot take control of this machine. He hasn't had enough experience as he has only experimented on one or two occasions. Although I have offered him the control I cannot get him to take it. Does anyone wish to ask him questions?

H.D.B.: I like the spirit to communicate with me instead of my asking questions.

CONTROL: Then I address myself to this gentleman who has spoken to me. The legal gentleman has come. He is in the fifties, fifty-seven or fifty-eight, and a man above the average. He looks like and has the temperament of an actor. He speaks with great precision. He has spent hours and hours in the culture of the voice. He has an attractive, strong personality. He does not look as old as he seems, but gives me the impression of having suffered very much. It appears his illness was of a cancerous nature . . . but he says "that is enough."

MARSHALL HALL: Though I am dealing at first with a subject of which I know nothing, yet I am dealing with one of which no man was so sure in all his life. In my early days, when I was a very young man without a brief, I had the impression that if I sent out a thought to unseen friends, I would get an answer; also in practically every case that I have defended during my picturesque and difficult career, I have never worked without sitting for some time alone. Invariably I was told how I should conduct my case. Those who know me will not be surprised to hear that, when I went out, I was calmly convinced that I was sailing to a very fine country, and I cannot say I was sorry to go.

CONTROL: Is there anyone who would like to ask him how he became convinced?

MRS. D.S.: We should all like to know.

H.D.B.: But that is all to be found in print.

CONTROL: We will try to keep away from anything that has appeared in the Press. (*Pause.*) He does not know what you want him to say.

H.D.B.: Does he remember a certain séance with a clairvoyante? Information came through regarding his health. It was verified later, and two years after, he

died. He disputed the information and discussed it with me. Several names were given, but he said they could be found in *Who's Who*, though an obvious slip had been made. I tried to get from him during his lifetime exactly what that was, but he wouldn't tell me.

CONTROL: He says a reference was made to the name of his father, and that his name was associated with another family. That was erroneous. What upset him was that it was supposed that he was related to another medico. (*Uncertain—it might have been "medical family," or "medical fraternity".*)

H.D.B.: I can verify that after.

CONTROL: He said, "Stress was laid on that point, and, as it was incorrect, I knew the personality was not connected with my father." He says he remembers meetings with you.

H.D.B.: He was never explicit on this point, and I cannot make out why he didn't clear it up.

CONTROL: (*Notes not clear.*)

H.D.B.: That was printed in *Who's Who*. It was an important point, and an exceptionally good evidential sitting. The health condition that he didn't know was given, and the forecast of his death in a year or two. He dismissed this as an error.

CONTROL: He says the message that came from his father, that was in the name of his father, was an erroneous impression that he could not accept.

H.D.B.: He has met his father, I take it, on the other side?

CONTROL: He says, yes, he has.

H.D.B.: Has he found out whether his father ever communicated or not?

CONTROL: (*Notes not clear.*) Do you understand who he would refer to as an alleged godfather?

H.D.B.: Yes!

CONTROL: He was instrumental in putting a great deal in front of him, but he didn't believe so much while alive.

H.D.B.: Ask him whether he remembers when he last spoke to me on earth.

CONTROL: He gives me the impression of seeing you a year or a year and a half before he passed over. He says it would be about eighteen months before he passed over. It does not seem that he saw you previous to that. There was an earlier spasm and then lapses, but it was a short connection. "Perhaps," he says, "it would

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have been better for both of us if we had had longer connections."

H.D.B.: Has he ever tried to communicate with me?

CONTROL: He has made efforts to communicate with you quite recently. Evidently in the fastness of your own home.

H.D.B.: Does he remember the method?

CONTROL: He says he does not like your method. He would rather project his voice. He neither likes to speak through control nor automatic writing. (*This reply was entirely incorrect.*)

H.D.B.: He liked the automatic writing in life.

CONTROL: But he doesn't like it now. He is glad to have a word with you on this. He says the reference to automatic writing *re* brother and relatives by hand of "W" will give you enough lead, but he is no longer interested in automatic writing. He says he is much more interested in a form of projection of his voice with an accumulator.

H.D.B.: Has he succeeded?

CONTROL: He says, faintly.

H.D.B.: Ask him if his finger-prints were taken.

CONTROL: He says, definitely, yes. He says, "I knew such a lot about crime that I was interested enough to leave that record."

H.D.B.: Could he say where that imprint is?

CONTROL: It was done in his own room.

H.D.B.: Then it was done by a private student?

CONTROL: He says he and "A" were joking about it one day, and they made up their minds to do it.

H.D.B.: It is rather an interesting point.

CONTROL: He refers you to "A."

H.D.B.: Who has it?

CONTROL: His daughter. They were put up with the rest of his collections. She has many letters and papers, and many things connected with their earlier association. Unfortunately the later one was not of such great interest.

H.D.B.: What does he think of Capital Punishment?

M.H.: I am glad to have you ask me, as it is a question which I have often considered. Life being what it is, no one should take that life away.

CONTROL: He says he does not come and say "Do as I tell you," but only that from the deductions he has drawn, that it does not seem wise or right to take life.

C.H.: May we ask what sort of work he is doing now?

CONTROL: He says, "I fear I am going to disappoint

you, but this is not Heaven, neither is it Hell, though it savours of both. My friends are still tied up with knots and problems, but I played at most things and was terribly sincere when I played. I am still playing. This is not a state of spirit any more than the one I have left, and I am young here, a mere baby. I have only been over a year or two. I am doing what other infants do, opening my eyes, looking round and asking questions. There is still a lot of the earth man left in me, thank God. I am still in a state of matter, with a more beautiful and much less troublesome body. I take a hand in anything that is going on. I am interested in the scientific developments which are taking place. This is a place where free-will predominates."

H.D.B.: Does he remember giving me his personal opinions with regard to a certain sitting?

CONTROL: He says he remembers speaking about it to you.

H.D.B.: He spoke once or twice about it.

CONTROL: He says he was deeply and vitally interested, much more so than he led you to believe. He says that first sitting made him feel like a schoolboy. He wondered if the heavens were not going to open.

H.D.B.: He made a personal confession to me with reference to his feelings about a certain direct Voice Séance.

CONTROL: He said he was always looking on both sides of the question, and although willing to receive and believe, there was always the element of if and but.

H.D.B.: Yes, quite, but he hasn't given me the answer.

CONTROL: He speaks of the mental effect it had. His trained mind said one thing, and his psychological mind another.

H.D.B.: I know it is impossible to remember everything. Has he met Dewar?

CONTROL: Now that pleases him immensely, and he says "also our friend and litigant F.E."

CHORUS: "F.E.—Birkenhead."

CONTROL: Yes, he is the gentleman, Madame. Of the first gentleman he says, "With hands in pockets he has looked over it all, and says to me, 'This isn't a bad place to find oneself in at all. Pity if the (?) Churches should come in and ask for building sites.'"

MEMBER: Is he sure he is not in Hell?

CONTROL: He says, "I believe this much firmly, that

all experience is growth, and that we partake of good and evil through every experience, and that it can be Hell or Heaven according to our potential sight. From my own point of view I am not in Hell. In life I did most of the things I desired to do. I wanted to achieve a certain amount of success, and I did this with childish glee and vanity. As far as I am concerned, I am now in a comfortable part of the globe. I don't call it Heaven. It is an expression of this personality that always will be me. Here is freedom from pain, freedom from sorrow, the vision which has led me all my life and which I would not change. I came to you because I was curious to know what you would have to say to me. This mind of the child you see is still at play. It has given me great pleasure to come to-night.

OMNES: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Can you tell me just this: Why does Sir Edward Marshall Hall use the first person when he is speaking?

CONTROL: I have to do that for him. Would it interest you to learn my method?

ALL: Yes, please.

CONTROL: I am not with you. I stand, as it were, on a platform, and if a man refuses to speak into the instrument I seek to be his interpreter. You send the thought, he catches it, and as you are speaking he is giving me the answer to your thought. There are two channels, the mind of the Medium and that of the Control. Remember that we are two personalities, therefore you are bound to lose a very great deal of the personality of whoever is communicating. Think of it—the communication has to come through two minds, the mind of the Control and that of the Medium. Can you hope to get accurate answers to your questions? But we do the best we can.

Here the sitting closed.

## CHAPTER V

### A PSYCHOMETRIC SITTING

*Frau Lotte Plaatz—Impression from a cigarette case—A correct description—Good indications of character—Physical characteristics—A bad flounder—A real point of evidence—A failure.*

May, 1930.

IN May of 1930, Frau Lotte Plaatz, a German psychometrist, was engaged by the National Laboratory of Psychical Research to pay a visit.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, I may explain that psychometry is a form of mediumship under which, on handling an object possessed by a deceased person, memories and traits of that person can sometimes be recalled by the medium.

Frau Plaatz had been the subject of scientific experimentation on the Continent for some months, and her powers had been under the observation of several well-known doctors and scientists in Germany, and it was claimed that brilliant results had been recorded. I was duly notified of her visit, and attended two sittings, records of which I append.

The first sitting took place at about 3.30 p.m. I handed Frau Plaatz a thin gold cigarette case, which had not been used for over seven years.

Frau Plaatz was somewhat slow in starting to psychometrize, and she got varying impressions.

FRAU PLAATZ: I get the impression of you. Is it your cigarette case?

H.D.B.: It is mine now, but it did not always belong to me.

FRAU PLAATZ: I get the impression of three people. There is a lady connected with it. Was there a quarrel?

I told Frau Plaatz that I could not connect a quarrel with it. After the sitting was over, however, I remembered there had been a slight quarrel between myself and the original owner of the cigarette case, and the lady in question, resulting in a break in the friendship for a few months. After the original owner died, the cigarette

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case became the property of his wife, and afterwards came into my possession.

FRAU PLAATZ (*describing original owner*): He was precise and quiet. Connected with books and study. Good brains. Not a business man.

(*Correct description. He was a professional man. He studied continuously throughout his life.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: Interested in psychics when alive.

H.D.B.: No. He was not.

FRAU PLAATZ: I get writing through him. I don't like his mouth. Good head for calculations.

(*Quite correct.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: Had a pain on chest. Gasping for breath. Cannot get air. I cannot go up—I feel as if I were falling. Died unexpectedly—suddenly.

(*All this description is exact. The owner suffered from heart trouble for several years before he died. He passed away quite suddenly.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: He would say things sharply. Dominating in manner. I want things in my own hands. To rule. There was a quarrel. At the time he thought: "Well, let him think what he likes." There were men all around him. He was always talking to them. Did not travel so much as you.

(*Correct. Good indication of character. His associations were almost entirely with men: in his profession and also socially.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: I feel an objective personality. Quiet, but could be awfully quick. At times the whole man changed and came out of his reserve. He could be full of arrogance, which you could see in his chin. He was outwardly cold—used his elbows. (*Here Frau Plaatz used her elbows to indicate.*) He was cold, but did not mean it—almost like going over a dead body.

(*Quite correct. This was a physical characteristic.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: Money—money—must have lost money.

(*Incorrect—so far as I know.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: 13, or 1913. He passed over on a 13.

(*1913 had no connection whatever with him as far as I know.*)

H.D.B.: No.

FRAU PLAATZ: Hard voice—nothing warm. Cold—hard. Did he have a bad fall? I feel as if he were falling.

(*Quite correct. He fell down with a heart attack and for some years had the feeling of falling.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: W. He was not W.

H.D.B.: Yes. He was.

FRAU PLAATZ: Was it William?

H.D.B.: No.

(*Although W was correct, there was a bad flounder over the correct name, which was not given.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: I see a hand. I don't like the hand. It is cold—without heart—not a nice thumb. But a positive hand—nothing weak in this man.

(*These are merely the medium's impressions.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: Was he married?

H.D.B.: Yes.

FRAU PLAATZ: Not an adventurous life. Life using elbows. A straight line which he would never leave. Awfully obstinate. Character changed later through shocks. He would never tell. Inside he changed and became much softer.

(*All this was fairly accurate.*)

FRAU PLAATZ: Walter. I get the name Walter.

H.D.B.: I do not know him.

After this the medium said that the entity had left and we chatted for two or three minutes on psychic matters, and I thought the sitting had concluded. Suddenly, however, the medium said: "Here he is—he is laughing aloud."

H.D.B.: Perhaps he is laughing because the description of him was not particularly complimentary.

FRAU PLAATZ: He is here still. He is laughing. He is not the sort of man who would ever attract me, but I like his forehead. He is intellectual. His face looks as if he wore a mask. He was not easy to get on with, but he did not bother. His manner was aloof.

(*Correct.*)

FRAU PLAATZ (*quite suddenly and spontaneously*): He is here walking across the room. I like the way he walks. It is not weak—positive. There is some music in the man. It is a peculiarly characteristic walk. It is amusing. (*Here the medium laughed.*) He has a sense of humour with a face like nothing. I would recognize his typical walk anywhere.

The description of the characteristic walk is the one real point of evidence. The character in question had an extraordinarily individual walk. A slow, quiet, arrogant sort of walk, with head erect and usually immovable, and yet this peculiar walk of his always conveyed a sense of jaunty humour to the observer.

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On the whole I consider the sitting an interesting one.

I had a second sitting with Frau Lotte Plaatz a week later. This was, however, a complete failure. She had been invited to Ascot, and I am afraid the scene occupied her mind entirely to the exclusion of the unseen.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE GENTLE ART OF FISHING

*Mrs. Cantlon—A Clairvoyant trance medium—Pidgin-English—  
Guesswork that went wrong—More fishing—A bad shot—An  
utter fiasco—More nonsense—A thoroughly unsatisfactory sitting.*

October 24, 1930.

MRS. CANTLON is a professional Clairvoyant and clair-audient medium, and the following is a verbatim account of my only experience with her.

Mrs. Cantlon's mediumship differs very considerably from that of Mrs. Osborne Leonard, Mrs. Scales, Mrs. Barkell, and Mrs. Garrett. With these mediums, as a rule, the majority of communications are volunteered. With Mrs. Cantlon, however, my experience was throughout that the sitter was asked leading questions by the medium, which he, or she, was expected to answer, thus opening out a lead. It is a method which may be called "fishing," and the questions put by the medium to the sitter would, to my mind, destroy the value of any evidential point given, even if such were acquired.

*Sitting held with Mrs. Cantlon at "Dorincourt"  
at 5.15 p.m. on October 24, 1930*

The sitting was held in my usual séance room, the "medium," Mrs. Cantlon and myself being the only ones present.

Mrs. Cantlon said she desired a subdued light. A candle was therefore used, by which I took my notes.

Mrs. Cantlon sits as a "clairvoyant-trance" medium.

She stated, before going into trance, that she would give me a little clairvoyance.

MRS. CANTLON: There is a woman. I get the name "Mary." Do you know her?

H.D.B.: No.

MRS. CANTLON: I see beside you a prehistoric man. A negro—short and squat. There is a "George" in the spirit world. I see an old man with a long beard and skull cap. Learned. I get the letter "A." (Slight pause.) Do you know a "Douglas"?

H.D.B.: No.

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MRS. CANTLON: I get "Eva."

H.D.B.: I cannot place her.

MRS. CANTLON: You will go through it for the next three months. You might go to America early in the next year—unexpectedly. Five is your number. Do you know "Harry" or "Larry"?

H.D.B.: No.

MRS. CANTLON: I see a short, stout, round lady. She is dark and has a short nose. Do you know "Lily"?

H.D.B.: No.

MRS. CANTLON: I may tell you that when I go into trance my control is called "White Chief."

At 5.22 p.m. the "medium" took one or two deep but quite normal breaths, and then assumed a condition of trance. She kept her eyes closed throughout until the end of the sitting. Her condition, voice, and manner appeared to me quite normal and bore no resemblance to the varying condition of trance I have observed in other mediums.

MRS. CANTLON: Good evening. I am "White Chief." I see a stormy sea. You have anxiety about business. You must go slow for six moons. In March there is a bright patch.

All this was told in a very loud "voice," exactly the same as Mrs. Cantlon's, but using the full extent of her lung power. It was told in broken English. In a minute or so the pidgin-English of the "control," "White Chief," developed into the broken English which might be used by an amateur actress, attempting to play a French part. Mrs. Cantlon then proceeded to give a few further attempts at forecasting of a similar nature to that which one would receive from a fortuneteller at a bazaar.

MRS. CANTLON: I get the name "Annie"—"Mary."

H.D.B.: I can place "Annie," but I do not know a "Mary."

Mrs. Cantlon then proceeded to give a very ordinary description of "Annie." As I have written two long books containing communications from "Annie," this had, of course, no value whatever.

MRS. CANTLON: "Annie" says you are writing a book. She has her mother with her. A little lady, white hair, short. She refers to young Dennis. There is a heavy vibration in the room. She says you (H.D.B.) have high blood pressure. There is trouble with the kidneys and also bladder trouble.

(I felt perfectly fit, and my doctors have discovered no such symptoms.)

MRS. CANTLON: Be careful of young Dennis. There is trouble in his lungs and chest. He is below weight. Build him up. His nerves are in a bad condition.<sup>1</sup> "A" says she wants to talk to you about the literary side. What about the book? She says, did you take a book out of the bookcase?

H.D.B.: Well, I take hundreds of books from the case at various times.

*A gap.*

MRS. CANTLON: She says there is a pile of papers and manuscript, which you have left behind. Have you started to write something and then put it on one side and left it? She says you must go on.

H.D.B.: No, I have not done that.<sup>2</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: I see a great success to the book which is in the publisher's hands. I would not have it published before Christmas, because the condition in the whole world is bad. Have it published in the New Year. "Annie" is swaying her body to and fro. She says you are undecided about it and it will be a big success.<sup>3</sup> There is a little lady here—I get the name—Fell—Fell—Fell—Fell—Scratch—Scratch—Scratch—<sup>4</sup>

H.D.B.: That is very interesting. I knew Felicia Scatchard. Would you please ask her when and where she last talked to me?

MRS. CANTLON: She talked to you through a tube.<sup>5</sup>

H.D.B.: I am afraid Felicia Scatchard has made a

<sup>1</sup> As my son, Dennis Anthony Bradley, had been at home with a slight illness for a few days and had just previously met Mrs. Cantlon in my house, and taken tea with her, she was of course aware that he was temporarily unfit. As for the remarks regarding his lungs and chest—these are perfectly sound—sounder by far than her remarks.

<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, I never leave any of my writing work once it is started. I have no manuscript in my possession which has been unused or unpublished.

<sup>3</sup> All this was very safe guess-work on the part of Mrs. Cantlon, considering the number of books I have written during the last few years. Strangely enough, however, at the time of this sitting I had no new literary work whatever in my publisher's hands; nor had I written one line so far of any new manuscript.

<sup>4</sup> Felicia Scatchard was a well-known spiritualist and psychical researcher, and the name is known to all mediums. She passed over a year or so back.

<sup>5</sup> This was a very safe guess, as it is well known that I have experimented considerably in "direct voice" séances, where luminous megaphones are used, through which some of the inexperienced spirits manifest their "voices."

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mistake there, because she has never spoken to me through a tube, either at a "direct voice" séance, or on the telephone while she was on the earth plane.

MRS. CANTLON: Wait a minute. I will ask her again. Did you speak to her through "White Hawk"?

H.D.B.: No. I have never spoken to her through "White Hawk."<sup>1</sup>

MRS. CANTLON (*again fishing, and trying a third time*): She says she met you with a lot of people at a party—to meet someone.

H.D.B.: That is correct.<sup>2</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: Felicia has a message for you. A band is being organized in the spirit world early in the next year. You (H.D.B.) will work through her when you write. "W" will carry the link. I get "W.A."<sup>3</sup>

Felicia says she was always friendly with you.<sup>4</sup>

I see a man about medium height. Forty or more. Stout. Big shoulders. Fine blue eyes. Straight nose. Well shaped. Square chin. I get the name "Warren." Rather jolly—rubbing his hands.<sup>5</sup> Warren says you have been depressed. Things will be better earlier in the New Year. He says you have just finished a book. It may be coming out just before Christmas.

H.D.B.: That is very interesting.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "White Hawk" is the control of Mrs. Barkell. Mrs. Barkell is a clairvoyant trance medium of integrity through whom I have had a few evidential sittings. "White Hawk" is very well known in psychic circles.

<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence whatever in this, as in psychic circles there are many meetings and parties, etc., to which one is often asked to meet certain people.

<sup>3</sup> This is, of course, an attempt to connect Warren Clarke—a very well-known character in my books. I referred to him throughout as "W.A." in "Towards the Stars."

<sup>4</sup> This is absolutely incorrect. I only met Miss Felicia Scatchard about twice in my life.

<sup>5</sup> One part of this description applies to Warren Clarke—which appears in my books. The other is a very bad, clumsy and incorrect adaptation.

<sup>6</sup> My replies to messages and inquiries were perfectly polite throughout the entire sitting. It should be noted that on the one or two occasions when I had previously met Mrs. Cantlon she had asked me what work I was doing. I make a point, however, of never discussing the character of any literary work upon which I happen to be engaged. She was therefore absolutely safe in assuming that this was a book and that naturally it would shortly be published, but, as a matter of fact, she was entirely wrong because—which she did not know—it was a play written in collaboration. Mrs. Cantlon's assumptions were logical. The facts, however, were unfortunate for her guess-work.

MRS. CANTLON: I get Germany. What have you been doing in Germany?<sup>1</sup>

H.D.B.: I am interested in Germany. Can you give me any information of the sittings in Saxony?

MRS. CANTLON: The sittings have been considerably better and they will come out much better later on.<sup>2</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: I get an atmosphere of stodge among the sitters. What have they been doing with a slate?

H.D.B.: I have not received the latest accounts. Perhaps you will tell me what they have been doing with the slate.

MRS. CANTLON: I see a slate. They have been using a slate.

H.D.B.: I don't know.<sup>3</sup>

H.D.B. (*giving Mrs. Cantlon a lead, as a test*): Can you tell me how John is getting on?

MRS. CANTLON (*obviously fishing*): Where is he? In this country?

H.D.B.: No. He is not in this country.

MRS. CANTLON: There is nothing of any outstanding importance to be communicated. It was a first trial. Afterwards it will be much better. John is out of his element because it was a very mixed crowd. The sittings hung fire at the start. Then they became better and they were good at the last. The mixture of nationalities is not good for the vibrations.<sup>4</sup>

I get George. He has not been at all well. There is throat trouble with perpetual strain. You will probably hear from him about Christmas. He has been nervy lately.<sup>5</sup>

H.D.B.: Can you tell me anything more about John?

<sup>1</sup> As a series of articles in regard to certain of my experiences in Germany had appeared in the English papers, the indication can easily be understood. Knowing that these records had been published, and being in close contact with certain people in Germany, I immediately switched the inquiry into a channel of happenings of the last months, the particulars of which Mrs. Cantlon had no knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> This is absolutely wrong, because a series of very successful sittings had been privately conducted there. This was known only to me, and just recently they had not been so successful as hitherto.

<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact the slate form of mediumship is used in America and other countries, but no slate has ever been used in the séances to which I referred.

<sup>4</sup> All this is absolute nonsense, and had no application.

<sup>5</sup> I know no George with the exception of George Valantine—the American medium—and a day or two previous to this sitting I had heard from him saying that he was in the best of health.

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It is quite an important matter as I shall be able to tell him what has transpired to-day.

MRS. CANTLON: Is he dark?

H.D.B.: No.<sup>1</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: Eva—who is she? Is she connected with you?

H.D.B.: I don't think so. I know nothing whatever of any Eva.

MRS. CANTLON: Is Warren's sister with him?

H.D.B.: I don't know.

MRS. CANTLON: I get the name Hilda. Do you know Hilda?

H.D.B.: No.

MRS. CANTLON: Do you know Maud?

H.D.B.: No.

MRS. CANTLON: I get an old lady. She has a big nose, but is short and thin. Connected with John.

H.D.B.: I cannot say whether this is correct or not.

MRS. CANTLON: Do you know Emily? Or Emma?

H.D.B.: No.

MRS. CANTLON: The old lady may be John's grandmother. She has with her a tall fair man.<sup>2</sup> I get David. Do you know David?

H.D.B.: No—I know of no David.

MRS. CANTLON: Is John coming to this country?

H.D.B.: Quite possibly.

Here, tired of the terrible fiasco of this sitting, and the fishing for odd names, I tried to lead the conversation into another channel by asking a direct question.

H.D.B.: Will you please ask Warren how his brother is?

MRS. CANTLON: Has he had a bad stomach? Has there been an operation?

H.D.B.: Not to my knowledge.

MRS. CANTLON: There is danger of appendix trouble—indigestion—bad circulation. He does not like doctors and never goes near them.<sup>3</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: I get the name Dicks or Dixon.

H.D.B.: I know a Dixon. As a matter of fact I know two charming young people of that name.

MRS. CANTLON: To do with business?

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Cantlon then proceeded to give an extremely nondescript description of John, saying from time to time, "Is that correct?" Eventually she gave it up.

<sup>2</sup> Then followed more nondescript descriptions of odd persons.

<sup>3</sup> All this was absolute nonsense. The facts of the case make it appear simply ludicrous guess-work.

H.D.B.: No, I don't think so. At any rate, not at present.

MRS. CANTLON: You will do. I want to put you on your guard.<sup>1</sup> Warren says, will you tell his brother that he should have some advice. It is gastric.<sup>2</sup> Warren was so pleased about the baby.

H.D.B.: I am glad of that.<sup>3</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: His mother was very pleased about it. His mother is not too well.<sup>4</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: I get the name Joan. Do you know Joan?

H.D.B.: Yes, I know Joan.

MRS. CANTLON: Is she young?

H.D.B.: Yes, she is young.

MRS. CANTLON: Is she on the earth plane?

H.D.B.: Yes. Have you any message for her?

No answer was volunteered to my inquiry.

MRS. CANTLON: I get Lily. Do you know Lily?

H.D.B.: No, I am afraid I do not.

MRS. CANTLON: She is one of your Guides. She is connected with you. She belongs to your family. She was a stillborn child.

H.D.B.: Was it a stillborn child of my mother?

MRS. CANTLON: Yes. You did not know of it.<sup>5</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: I get Norman. Do you know Norman?

H.D.B.: Yes, I know Norman.

MRS. CANTLON: Is he in the spirit world?

H.D.B.: No. The Norman I know is quite alive and fit.

H.D.B. (*trying to relieve the deadly monotony*): If Warren is there, will you ask him if he can tell you anything whatever of the sittings in Saxony?

MRS. CANTLON: Lieders. (I thought I might place this name as that of some friends of my sister-in-law in Saxony.)

<sup>1</sup> This was ridiculous.

<sup>2</sup> This remark was utterly wrong and absurd.

<sup>3</sup> There are quite a number of babies born among the relatives of a family, but strangely enough this remark could not possibly apply to Warren.

<sup>4</sup> To my knowledge Warren's mother has no reason to be interested in any particular baby whatever. Although the message might be assumed to be a safe one as grandmothers often have several babies in whom they are interested. In this case, however, it was utterly wrong.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Cantlon might feel it quite safe to assert this, but my mother, for whom I had a very great affection, always talked to me quite openly, and she would most certainly have told me of any incident such as this, if such a thing had occurred.

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H.D.B.: That is interesting. Can you tell me something more about them?

Slight pause.

MRS. CANTLON: What have they been doing there? The forces are scattered.

H.D.B.: I would like to know something more about Lieder. It may be of value. Can you tell me anything more?

MRS. CANTLON: Lieder—on the earth plane?

H.D.B.: Yes.

MRS. CANTLON: They change their sitters a good deal.<sup>1</sup>

H.D.B.: Can you give me any evidential points in a message which I could send to them?

No answer.

H.D.B.: Can you tell me if Warren has heard any news from America?

MRS. CANTLON: Warren says he referred to George's throat.

This reply was sheer nonsense.

MRS. CANTLON: Has there been any electrical experiment in here?<sup>2</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: Lieder. I get the name definitely.

H.D.B.: Will you spell it?

MRS. CANTLON: L I E D E R.

H.D.B.: I do not know whether that is correct or not. I will find out.

MRS. CANTLON: Is Lieder the medium?

H.D.B.: No.

MRS. CANTLON: Is he connected with the medium?

H.D.B.: I'm not sure whether he has sat with them.

MRS. CANTLON: They sat in a medium sized room with panels. There are people sitting round a table and there is a slate. Yes, there is a slate. It is more mental than physical. One sits at the end in a high back chair in a darkened room. There is a Chinese spirit in yellow robes—Lang Che. There are cross-currents. They have had four sittings—not too successful.<sup>3</sup> There is a very big man here. He has dark eyes and hair. I get the name Jack. Do you know Jack?

H.D.B.: No.

<sup>1</sup> Totally incorrect.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably Mrs. Cantlon referred to my séance room; but there had been no experiments there.

<sup>3</sup> The whole of the details given as description are absolutely nonsensical from beginning to end. And "Leider" spelled wrongly had nothing whatever to do with sittings.

MRS. CANTLON: I get the name Robinson or Robertson. Do you know him?

H.D.B.: I knew a Robinson.<sup>1</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: He had an accident with a car. You met at dinner.

H.D.B.: We might have.

MRS. CANTLON: Do you know a Hugh?

H.D.B.: I know one or two Hughs.

Subject not pursued.

MRS. CANTLON: Annie is here. She says she is disappointed about something. It was not worth all the trouble you took.<sup>2</sup>

MRS. CANTLON: Take care of the boy's chest. Don't listen to what they say about nothing being the matter with him.

Here there was a pause, and a sort of groping silence.

MRS. CANTLON: Have you had a pipe burst?

H.D.B.: No. I occasionally have trouble with pipes in various parts of the house, as often happens. This is a usual occurrence with a house which has been built for fifty years.

The subject was dropped.

MRS. CANTLON: Annie says you will be asked to speak at a big dinner.<sup>3</sup>

The sitting then merged into a further silence after which Mrs. Cantlon said that the power was going and we finished.

This report is taken from my verbatim notes with complete fairness. It has been necessary to cut many of the varying inquiries which were made, because if they were published they would only still further bore the reader. I regard it as one of the most unsatisfactory and doubtful sittings with a clairvoyant medium I have ever held.

Some time after this experience my secretary, Miss Baylis, booked a sitting with Mrs. Cantlon under an assumed name. Exactly similar methods were employed. The usual fishing and leading up to questions took place. Strings of names were given, none of which were correctly placed.

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact I have not seen the Robinson I referred to for fifteen years. Although Robinson is quite a common name I do not seem to have met many of them.

<sup>2</sup> Nonsense again.

<sup>3</sup> I get several invitations to big dinners, most of which I refuse, so a statement of this description has no value whatever.

## CHAPTER VII

### MRS. SCALES, CLAIRVOYANT MEDIUM

*Methods of making appointments—Sitters unknown to medium—A Scandinavian's experience—A murder in South Africa—A warning—The motor accident—Miss Fay Compton's sitting—Evidential communications—Miss Baylis's sittings—Voluminous notes—Some extracts.*

#### I

In my book "The Wisdom of the Gods" I have recorded two sittings which I had with Mrs. Scales, the clairvoyant and clairaudient medium, which were exceptionally good and of evidential value.

In consequence of my experience with her I have sent to Mrs. Scales many sitters who have also obtained good results. The method I have invariably adopted is that the first appointment for any sitter is made anonymously; therefore, since it is impossible for her to know the names of the sitters, or anything about them, any communications which may come through are of authentic value. The results, of course, vary very considerably, but some have been remarkable.

For example, a Scandinavian gentleman, who had been resident for some years in South Africa, called upon me and asked my assistance in recommending him a good medium, because, although he was not a spiritualist, he had read my books, and wished to experiment, as certain important events had recently happened in his life. What these events were he did not mention. He was an extremely intelligent man, and, so far as the subject was concerned, he told me frankly that he could not help feeling sceptical.

He had a sitting with Mrs. Scales, and visited me afterwards. He then informed me that the reason he had particularly wanted to be put in touch with a medium was that his wife had recently been mysteriously murdered in South Africa and the murderer had not been discovered.

He told me that he had received astonishing communications purporting to come from his wife. Through

Mrs. Scales, his house and farm in South Africa, and the exact position and outlook of the room in which his wife was murdered, were minutely described to him. The exact position in which his wife's body was found was also described and the statement was made that she had been shot by a black man, who was employed on an adjacent farm. All the details were verified by him as being correct, with the exception, of course, of the black man who was alleged to have committed the crime, which, he said, was quite logical, although there was no evidence to prove this.

Another instance was the case of a young man—a resident of Australia—who called upon me in London, saying that he had recently lost his mother. He was an only child and passionately fond of her. I sent him anonymously to Mrs. Scales, and a week or so afterwards he came to me to tell me that he had had a remarkable sitting, in which he had received what he regarded as many evidential communications, and that at the end of the sitting his mother warned him that on no account was he to leave his flat on the following Sunday evening, but that he was to remain there and give his thoughts to her. He told me that he was a little surprised that she should specify this particular evening, and that she had insisted that this was necessary for his own sake. On this particular Sunday he had been motoring with two men friends, and they desired him to stay and dine with them at an hotel some few miles out in the country. In the ordinary course he would have welcomed the suggestion, but remembering the emphatic message which had been given to him, he made an excuse and returned to his flat. His two friends dined together, and whilst motoring back to London an accident occurred in which one of them was killed and the other gravely injured.

Personally I do not believe in forecasting, and I entirely disagree with the theory of predestination. I merely relate this incident because the circumstances were peculiar.

On another occasion I arranged a sitting with Mrs. Scales, and took with me Miss Fay Compton. Mrs. Scales did not know beforehand that I should be accompanied by Miss Compton. It is, of course, quite possible that she may have recognized her, but I did not introduce her by name.

I had arranged with Miss Compton that if the sitting appeared likely to be a successful one and personal com-

munications were volunteered, after the opening I would leave her to continue alone.

I had with me a writing-pad, and when Mrs. Scales had gone into trance I took verbatim notes.

After a few opening sentences by the control "Chloe" the communications were afterwards addressed to Miss Compton, and came through in the first person from Harry Pelissier (her former husband).

For the first three quarters of an hour I took down a dozen pages or so of notes. All the communications were personal and intimate to Miss Compton, and, in my opinion, of a distinctly evidential nature. Certain arrangements of hers, in regard to personal affairs, were discussed; arrangements in regard to the future, of which I certainly had no knowledge and of which I am quite certain that the medium had no knowledge.

Half-way through the sitting I suggested to Miss Compton that, as all the communications were of an intimate nature, she should continue the sitting alone, and that I should wait for her in another room.

The sitting lasted about one and three quarter hours, and afterwards Miss Compton and I discussed the points.

I handed to her a dozen sheets of foolscap notes which I had recorded. In my opinion this was an evidential sitting, because certain very distinct knowledge was displayed by the communicant of the odd events which were discussed, and a few prognostications were made which afterwards took place.

A few months later my wife had a sitting with Mrs. Scales, when a considerable number of personal and domestic matters were discussed. At the end of the sitting the control said that Pelissier was present, and he desired "Mabel to tell Herbert that Fay was writing to him that day." This was a volunteered piece of news outside the knowledge of the medium or of Mrs. Bradley. A week or so prior to this sitting I had written an unimportant note to Miss Compton on various theatrical matters, which called for no reply. Mrs. Bradley had no knowledge of this letter, and on the morning following the sitting I received a letter from Miss Compton, addressed to me from Leeds, where she had been acting.

## II

With regard to my personal experience of clairvoyance, it has become increasingly difficult to obtain fresh evidential points, because most of the well-known mediums have naturally read my psychic books, and therefore it may be argued that they possess a considerable knowledge of my own personal communicants. It was because of this, with a view to obtaining fresh evidential points, that I thought it would be interesting to arrange for a few anonymous sittings for my secretary, Miss Q. Baylis, who would be able to take in shorthand, verbatim notes of everything that transpired. Every precaution was taken by me that the mediums should not know who she was, and since I had sent various other sitters, unconnected with me, anonymously, none of the mediums would know that Miss Baylis was in any way connected with my personal business and affairs.

The first experiment was made with Mrs. Scales on November 11, 1927. The verbatim notes of these sittings amount to tens of thousands of words. It is therefore necessary to summarize, and to condense them to a minimum.

I can only give a slight indication of the first anonymous sitting with Mrs. Scales.

In the voluminous verbatim notes over 99 per cent. represented names and communications volunteered through the medium, and less than one per cent. questions, carefully put and considered, by the sitter.

The medium went into trance within less than three minutes, and her control "Chloe" spoke.

"Chloe" opened with a correct description of the sitter's character, and then:

CHLOE: Do you go up lots of stairs and then a step? And is there another door inside a door?

*This is an exact description of the flat in which Miss Baylis lives.*

CHLOE: Are you called secretaire? Oh, I know, you have a big white massa.

*It should be mentioned that "Chloe" is an Indian girl, and occasionally uses the vocabulary of her tribe. Men she always refers to as "massas."*

CHLOE: That is the massa with the pretty lady Annie

. . . the other people on your plane don't understand him. . . .

*Here followed a correct description of points in my own character, and since this sitting was an anonymous one, due consideration must be given to the fact that almost immediately the control stated: "Are you secretaire?" There was direct placing at once, which was followed by decidedly intelligent references to H.D.B.*

CHLOE: When is your birthday? Oh, I know—you are just about half-way.

*This volunteered statement is quite correct. The sitting took place in November and the sitter's birthday is in June. There is no reason whatever to believe that the medium could have known of this fact.*

There followed an exceptionally good description of Miss Baylis's secretarial work in connection with my writings, and a more or less logical forecast of future work, which might be considered evidential.

### III

From 1927 to 1931 Miss Baylis had seven or eight sittings with Mrs. Scales. Without exception those sittings were good. In refreshing contrast to certain other sittings, the replies to questions were consistently intelligent, there was much evidential material, and a considerable amount of personal information was given regarding myself and my literary work, all of which was perfectly correct.

As I have said, verbatim notes were taken throughout, but it is obviously impossible for me to reproduce them here—a few of the more striking and evidential points must suffice. In this connection I wish to emphasize the fact that all the statements were volunteered—there was no preliminary fencing and fishing in any case.

A reference was made to a trip abroad I had in contemplation. As a matter of fact I went to Oslo; this was entirely outside the medium's knowledge.

All names mentioned were volunteered; dates of birthdays were given, and the items of purely personal interest were all correct.

Some curious particulars—which afterwards proved correct—were given of dishonesty and pilfering at my business establishment. At one sitting considerable

information was volunteered with reference to my son, who was at that time far from well. The diagnosis was correct, and was entirely outside the knowledge of medium or sitter.

At the last sitting which Miss Baylis had, on March 5, 1931, there were references to her personal affairs given through her father, and, in particular, her arrangements in regard to a contemplated visit to Italy to visit a personal friend—a visit which took place a few weeks later—were discussed at length. I had asked Miss Baylis to put some guarded questions as to Valiantine. The answers were not particularly illuminating, and were somewhat vague, but reference was made to the unpleasant incidents referred to on another page, and a statement was made that the personal spirits connected with me were keeping the door closed.

While Mrs. Scales was under trance she spoke Italian—this, in reference to Miss Baylis's prospective visit.

There were also some good evidential points given by Miss Baylis's father. In this sitting he referred to a scarf—which he had given to her mother. On taking the matter up with her mother, Miss Baylis found that this was the last gift he gave her before he died—a fact outside the knowledge of the medium or the sitter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MRS. HESTER DOWDEN'S AUTOMATIC WRITING

*Mrs. Dowden—Communications from Johannes—An extraordinarily successful sitting—Evidential names at once—Correct initials—Evidence confirmed—Name volunteered.*

In my book "Towards the Stars" I recorded at length the various philosophical discussions I had with "Johannes," the control of Mrs. Hester Dowden.

Mrs. Dowden is the daughter of the late Edward Dowden, Professor of English literature, the author of a standard life of Shelley, a psychical research student, and a Shakespearian scholar.

Later I had communications from "Johannes" in the "direct voice" which are recorded in my second book on psychics, "The Wisdom of the Gods," together with records of the communications received through this control from the automatic writing of Mrs. Dowden.

I am of opinion that Mrs. Dowden is one of the best mediums in the world, but my studies with her have been entirely on the philosophical plane. She has, however, at various times, received remarkable communications, and latterly she has developed the evidential side of personal communications very considerably.

An anonymous appointment with her was made on the telephone, and on Friday, February 21, 1929, my secretary, Miss Baylis, held a sitting with her.

The whole of the communications were made through automatic writing by Mrs. Dowden, and these papers are in my possession. With regard to the essential points of volunteered names and evidential communications, it was exceptionally successful.

I append Miss Baylis's verbatim notes.

## SITTING

(Automatic Writing)

with

MRS. HESTER DOWDEN at 15 Cheyne Gardens, Chelsea  
on*Thursday, February 21, 1929, at 5.30 p.m.*

(Preliminary note.—It is remarkable to observe that immediately the sitting commenced the first thing that Mrs. Dowden wrote was “*H.R.B.*”—the correct initials of Miss Baylis’s father.)

H.R.B.: Harry, your father, Queenie. Did you expect me here or not? You are not going to write yourself, are you?

MRS. D.: Give your surname.

H.R.B.: No, that would spoil all the fun. Ask me at the end. I thought you’d rather I did not, Queenie, wouldn’t you? I was greatly amused at your being sent here.

Q.B.: Why?

H.R.B.: It is quite a surprise to me. Because it is not your sort of thing now, is it?

Q.B.: Do you mean because I am aiming for the “direct voice”? Perhaps you can tell me something about it.

H.R.B.: There is not enough power yet. It is working up, but not in that direction yet. The fact is, that you have so much and so many different powers that they rather scatter each other when you can gather together into one channel. There won’t be any further trouble. I’ll tell you what would help. If you could get another, and someone who is what might be called “heavy,” it might get things going.

Q.B.: Have you anyone to suggest?

H.R.B.: That is not easy, you’ll have to search for someone.

Q.B.: What do you mean by “heavy”?

H.R.B.: Someone who could give it out plentifully. Someone who could really help you.

MRS. D.: Who is the medium?

H.R.B.: Queenie. But the trouble so far is that she has no one there who can help her materially. That is badly wanting. Queenie, don’t let things mix. Be very definite about that. All your work so far has been a

mixture. But it will come, child; let nothing discourage you. A good voice medium is wanting, and you're the one to get it.

Q.B.: Is the circle all wrong? How many should there be?

H.R.B.: Five is better than three. Try to find five. At present the situation is this. The voice will come in time, but very slow in this way. Try to quicken the pace if you can. Her—that is D.—her fault is that she lets her power concentrate within herself instead of drawing it out for your benefit.<sup>1</sup>

Q.B.: You are always mentioning Elizabeth. Who is Elizabeth?

Mrs. D.: Was she related to you or your wife?

H.R.B.: Elizabeth—me.

Q.B.: Was it far back?

H.R.B.: Yes, a bit back; not my generation, the one before that on the mother's side.

Mrs. D.: I have an impression it was your mother's sister. Am I right?

H.R.B.: Yes, look back, always with me here.

Mrs. D.: Has she another name?

H.R.B.: Yes, her names are Elizabeth Anne.

Mrs. D.: Is Elizabeth here?

H.R.B.: Yes, but she does not want to talk herself.

Mrs. D.: What is her nationality?

H.R.B.: Irish.

Mrs. D.: What part does she come from?

H.R.B.: It's County Kerry.

Mrs. D.: Are you sure it is County Kerry?

H.R.B.: South County Kerry, she says—she says—yes, between Cork and Kerry. Look it up, that's all right. Remember, sister of your grandmother not mother. She and I are a bit alike. That is why she drifted to me, I think.

Mrs. D.: Is that why she comes to Queenie?

H.R.B.: Yes, all in a straight line—or maybe you'd call it a crooked one. You see it is a sister of my mother, then her son, then his daughter—all the same make.

H.R.B.: There is no one else here to-day, child. Do you want anyone else, or shall we talk business for a bit? By business, I mean the work you have done, and the work you are going to do, so shall we get on with that? Now, child, this time there are to be no checks

<sup>1</sup> All these communications correctly described the experimental sittings I had recently held with some friends of mine.

or set-backs. I say that to encourage you. It is going to be quite different. All clear now, and the "voice," no matter how slow, will surely come. But make the change now. So far there has been nothing to speak of—a little movement—a little whisper or so now and again—nothing more. Once the voice begins in earnest you can't interrupt, so have a look round for the others now, there's a good girl.

Q.B.: Are you helping with anyone else?

H.R.B.: Elizabeth would insist on coming, and a man who I thought would help, but I believe I could do the job best alone. The man was connected with D. So far I do all the spade work and that was done myself.

Q.B.: Why did you say you wanted to write?

H.R.B.: Because I wanted to get things clearly down on paper for reference, and not have any guides pushing me out.

Q.B.: Is Johannes there?

MRS. D.: Yes, he is there, but he is standing aside as there is somebody else waiting to speak to you. Do you know this lady?

JOHANNES: Yes, quite well. I have often been with her.

Q.B.: Have you helped me?

JOHANNES: I have done what I could under very trying circumstances. I believe I was a little help, but ever since that time I have been interested in her and her work. May I offer to help now?

Q.B.: Will you help the voice?

JOHANNES: Certainly you have a rather weak circle. The psychic power there doesn't concentrate, it scatters a great deal and the number is not sufficient for a beginning. It would be better to have five or six if possible; after that, when the work is fully in training, three would do. You have not begun in the full sense of the word yet. You know you are not yet able to send out the ectoplasm in a sufficient quantity.

MRS. D.: Is she the medium?

JOHANNES: Certainly, and the ectoplasm is loosened, but not yet flowing freely.

Q.B.: Is it necessary to sit in complete darkness?

JOHANNES: After a while, no. But it is better at present. Voice can be produced by any developed medium, in a low red light. No, not materially, but with a developed circle it would reduce the phenomena just a little. Your circle has not begun, as I said, so I

should not think the fire made any difference. First there will be whistlings and touches. Both of these before the voice. I will say this. Go on, change the circle, and I will help you. I can't do more than that—and don't let anyone persuade you that you have not got the power, for you certainly have.<sup>1</sup>

FATHER HARRY: Now shall we draw the curtain up? I told you I would give the surname at the end.

MRS. D.: Is it your surname?

H.R.B.: The same. I want to give her name. Queenie Baylis. Queenie Baylis.

MRS. D.: Who is she connected with?

H.R.B.: Dennis Bradley. She is his secretary. (Signature) Harry Baylis.

NOTE BY H.D.B.—As scrupulous care was used in making this appointment for an anonymous sitting, I regard the evidence of names and identity as remarkable.

<sup>1</sup> The volunteered references to the fire, whistling and touches were all correct.

## CHAPTER IX

### AN ANONYMOUS EXPERIMENT

*Sitting booked anonymously—The mediumship of Mrs. Garrett—Names volunteered—Good personal evidence—Names given unknown to sitter—Correct reference to a dog.*

IN the early part of 1929 an anonymous sitting was arranged for Miss Q. Baylis with Mrs. Garrett, the clairvoyant medium, at the British College of Psychic Science. The following is a verbatim account taken down in shorthand. Considerable passages have, however, been cut on account of the length. All these passages were of an intelligible character.

Within less than a minute the medium was completely under trance.

CONTROL: Madam, I am Uvani (?). I greet you. Peace be upon your work, your life, etc., etc. There are two ladies here—a little child and two gentlemen. One of the gentlemen is young—I think he met his passing over very quickly; the other is older—he went out after the war. The younger man went over, not on account of the war, but during the activities. There is a strong Celtic strain in you—is it the north of Scotland?

Q.B.: No—I am in no way connected with Scotland.

UVANI: Then it is the north of Ireland. Yes—it is Irish—it is strongly shown in you.

Q.B.: Yes—possibly.

UVANI: It is through a lady here—on earth she would have had nothing whatever to do with this subject. She was a very decided type of her own—strong—determined—deeply religious. She had had a bad time before she passed over. Trouble in the intestines. Her hair is grey—earlier she would have been very dark—her hair was black, but she went grey. High cheek-bones—distinguished looking—aristocratic. She is very close indeed to you—she gives the name of Elizabeth.

Q.B.: I have had the name “Elizabeth” given to me at several sittings.

UVANI: She gives me the name of Elizabeth Alice, or Alice Elizabeth. Is there a Mary connected with her?

## AN ANONYMOUS EXPERIMENT 75

This is where the strong Celtic strain comes from. (*Placed later as my father's mother's sister.*) Mary and Elizabeth are closely connected on the paternal side. A generation further back. Your mother remembers—she had a picture taken (of Elizabeth) when she was about fifty—in a coat. She is sitting with her hands folded. Elizabeth in a way was very domineering, but very courageous.<sup>1</sup>

UVANI: That most difficult gentleman. I want to talk to you about him. There is a lady closely connected with him here—she comes to you because you know him. She gives a peculiar name—Alerca—she is here in spirit. She wants to help you because you could help the man, she says.

I then remembered at a sitting some months ago I received a message for "C.R.A." from his father, and it was also mentioned that his mother accompanied him—giving a peculiar name similar to Alerca, which I could not get. I discovered afterwards that the mother's name was Alberta, which, however, had completely gone from my memory. This was a confirmation of a Mrs. Scales' sitting, when the name given to me was entirely unknown.

UVANI: He has been so unhappy sometimes—really unhappy. You know, in a queer way; he could talk to you. There has been a very difficult barrier—wanting this, wanting that. Dragging, pulling, making—  
influencing.

Q.B.: You mean a bad influence?

UVANI: Yes—bad, bad. But I think that influence is leaving him. He wants to start afresh, if you can understand what I mean.<sup>2</sup>

(Following straight on) William is here. Man about sixty-five. Tall, carried himself well. Soldierly type. Last two years broke up very much. Broad shouldered. Moustache. Full face. Connected with your father. Strong bond of friendship.<sup>3</sup>

(Continuing) Your father meant a great deal to you. A complete understanding. You could be with him for

<sup>1</sup> Mary and Elizabeth I found out, after the sitting, were the names of my father's mother and her sister; i.e., my great-aunt and my grandmother. Both these Christian names were outside my knowledge or the knowledge of the medium.

<sup>2</sup> These references, though personal, were evidential in character.

<sup>3</sup> This name and description of a character unknown to me was verified afterwards by a relative. It also tallies with a description given by Mrs. Scales at a previous sitting.

a long time in silence, but you understood. He was a very fine type of character. Who is the clergyman connected with your father? He is showing the white garments worn round the neck—and black garments too.

Q.B.: There are several—I am afraid I could not place him easily.

UVANI: He was a very great friend of your father's in earlier life. He was a very strong-minded man. He has a very kindly face. Side whiskers—and a small beard. A wonderful wide smile. A straight aquiline nose—good hands. In the seventies. Grandfather—broad-shouldered and aristocratic bearing. William is not connected with him, but has a John connected with him. Uncle John. He may have been an uncle by marriage. He is with your father.<sup>1</sup> (*Another description given of father.*) Who is Jack? In physical body. He is greatly interested in Jack.<sup>2</sup> His health is not too good—you will be hearing news of him soon. A mention of May—birthday—will be very close to you then.<sup>3</sup> He is taking a very great interest in your paintings. There is some connection with Italy in regard to these paintings. Are they in oils?

Q.B.: No.

UVANI: There is certainly a half Italian condition there.

Q.B.: I was told some time ago that I had been helped by an artist. Do you know who he is?

UVANI: Velasco.

Q.B.: Can you spell it?

UVANI: No—but that is the phonetic sound. Your father is very anxious that you should go on with the work.<sup>4</sup> You know, your father spoke to you first at a "voice" sitting. He says he was not able to speak with you for long, and his voice was husky—he spoke to you through the trumpet—he did his best.<sup>5</sup> Do you know you have a "Harry" always with you?

Q.B.: I don't know a Harry.

UVANI: Yes, you do—isn't it your father's name?

Q.B.: Oh, yes.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Correct personal evidence.

<sup>2</sup> The name of my father's brother.

<sup>3</sup> My father's birthday was in May.

<sup>4</sup> As a diversion I have from time to time essayed a few attempts in water-colours.

<sup>5</sup> Correct evidence. The first time my father communicated with me was in the "direct voice" at a Valantine séance in February, 1924.

<sup>6</sup> For the moment I did not recall that my father's name was Harry.

## AN ANONYMOUS EXPERIMENT 77

UVANI: That was a joke—he is pointing to himself. He says he is always with you. Annie has attached herself to you—she is giving very definite help. She has already done some very good work with someone else known to you. She is a great lady. She is sister to someone connected with you. You know this gentleman. Annie is coming through to give you all the help and encouragement she can. (A pause.) Who is Kitty?

Q.B.: I know a Kitty.

UVANI: Another very difficult person. You have had some very difficult times with her. She has had some troubles. There is someone here connected with her. A lady who is very devoted to her. She says she has been doing things which are entirely wrong and making her worried and unhappy. She has recently been making some changes—this lady is happier now. Will you give the message—this lady particularly wants the message to go through you—you have been instrumental in helping her at some time.<sup>1</sup>

UVANI: Are you connected with Herbert?

Q.B.: Yes.

UVANI: There is his mother, sister and father in spirit here.<sup>2</sup> They are taking a very great interest in you. And who is Mabel?—they are interested in her. She seems to have had a difficult time. Does she come in contact with Herbert? You know he has been causing a certain amount of disorder around him. You know he will go into the fight too quickly and then he gets disliked. He has power, and that power passes to you. He has done very great work. His best work is in the books on your shelf. He has done a great deal of good work—of universal value. The best efforts are contained in the first four books. Annie says she thinks you will agree with her here. Harry says have more faith in the pictures—have faith that you are being helped. You have a brother?

Q.B.: No.

UVANI: Yes, you have—by law—your sister's husband.

Q.B.: Oh yes, by law.

UVANI: He is making a move—another one. This will mean he is going to be better. Thank goodness for that. The sister has not been in too good health. She tried to wear a brave face, but her health is not particularly good at the moment. Who is George? Tell your mother

<sup>1</sup> Of a personal evidential nature.

<sup>2</sup> This is evidently a correct reference to H.D.B. and his relations.

George still remembers. Wilson and Seymour—to do with Bradshaw. Friends!<sup>1</sup>

UVANI: Has she (mother) had trouble with hearing? They have been looking after her in this respect. (Hearing bad recently, but has since improved.) I have been asked by your father to talk to you about your little dog. The little dog that went out quickly. He is quite all right, and he would like you to know. He is with him now. He says it had to be—he was destroyed, wasn't he? And he was so glad to be able to meet something which had belonged to him on earth.<sup>2</sup>

NOTE BY H.D.B.—In my opinion this sitting was an extremely successful and evidential one, and the manner in which the various personal names were freely and spontaneously volunteered by the medium was remarkable. It will be observed that the sitter, Miss Baylis, spoke chiefly in short interjections, and no lead was given by her to the communications which were given. A sitting such as this stands in distinct contrast to the fishing inquiries usually made by undeveloped and fraudulent mediums.

<sup>1</sup> Confirmed through my mother. Evidence quite correct. All these names were unknown to me at the time of the sitting.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence correct.

## BOOK II

### VALIANTINE IN ENGLAND, 1927

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE VALIANTINE SITTINGS IN 1927

*A family sitting—Evidential conversation—A dramatic description of death on the battle-field—My father speaks—Lord Charles Hope's sittings with Valiantine—Valiantine unwell—Poor results—Another poor sitting—Eighteen "voices" manifest—Bad conditions—I do not sit—Everett calls to me from the séance room—Mrs. Gavin's report—Mr. C. V. L. Hooman's report—Chinese, Italian and Spanish spoken—A mixed sitting—Little evidence—A curious incident—Lord Dewar.*

###### I

*February 4, 1927.*

AFTER the exceptionally long series of experiments conducted in 1925, under the mediumship of George Valiantine, which extended from February 13 for ten weeks, until April 24, the details of which are recorded in my book "*The Wisdom of the Gods*," there was an interval of two years before Valiantine again visited England in 1927. On this occasion Valiantine stayed with me at Dorincourt for about a fortnight, after which he went to stay with Lord Charles Hope at his flat in St. James's for about a month.

The first sitting held at Dorincourt was on February 4, 1927.

At this period the bulk of my time was occupied in writing "*The Natural State*," the manuscript of which I had agreed to deliver to my publishers at a certain date in the spring of that year. This book was a work of fiction, and had no reference whatever to psychics. I had, at this time, no intention whatever of writing any further books on psychic matters, because I had found the subject was occupying an undue proportion of my time, to the detriment of other work which I wished to do.

The short notes which I took of the sittings which were held in my house were therefore abbreviated to the utmost extent, and contain merely a record of the various "voices" which manifested.

The first sitting held with Valiantine when he arrived was just a family one, and there were present: George Valiantine and myself, Mrs. Bradley and my young son, Pat, then aged ten, who, incidentally, I should mention, has had very considerable experience of psychic phenomena, both under Valiantine's mediumship and also with the experiments conducted in my own family circle, under the mediumship of my wife and myself.

At this sitting no music was played on the gramophone. The four of us went into my study, and within two minutes the first "voice" spoke. Dr. Barnett greeted us, and his "voice" was particularly strong.

The sitting lasted just over an hour, and, in all, thirteen different and distinct "voices" manifested. Of the Valiantine Guides, in addition to Dr. Barnett, Bert Everett (Valiantine's brother-in-law), Kokum, Honey (speaking in the childish tones which I have described in my books), Black Foot (a new Valiantine Guide, speaking in deep tones from the centre of the floor), whom I had never heard before: Cristo D'Angelo (speaking in Italian, and referring to the Italian translation of my book "Towards the Stars" ("Verso Le Stelle")) and Pat O'Brien manifested. Pat O'Brien told me that he had often seen my father, who had died in 1925. The conversation with this Guide might be described as evidential, because among other things I asked him whether my father knew that I had been over to Ireland a few months previously. Pat replied that he did know this; that my father had seen me over there, and had been with me when I was at Galway (name volunteered). Pat then added: "Your father says: 'Why didn't you go over with me before?'" This is quite correct, because my father had suggested once or twice before he died that I should go over to Ireland with him.

After this conversation a shrill whistle was heard two or three times in the circle, and then a "voice," announcing itself to be Harold Howard, spoke. He said he was killed in the war: in an advance "over the top." He told me that it was at least twenty minutes before he realized that he had passed over. He stated that for this twenty minutes, although his body was lying on the field,



GEORGE VALIANTINE

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he went on with the attacking party thinking he was still alive. He then found that those around him could not see him, and he went back and viewed his body lying dead. He then discovered round him many other spirits, and later he was taken to a place of rest.

I could not claim recognition of this particular spirit named Harold Howard, and I mention the incident only because the description of his experience was so very graphically delivered.

After this a "voice" announcing itself to my wife as "Aunt Carrie" manifested. The conversation was extremely fluent, and there were many references to her sister (my wife's mother), Mrs. Hunt, and the various family matters which were discussed were all of an evidential nature.

Warren Clarke (my brother-in-law) spoke for some considerable time, referring to many matters concerning his daughters, Betty and Phyllis, whose names, and many others, were correctly volunteered by him. He referred to his wife, who had recently married again. He spoke of the marriage in an extremely nice way, and said that he was entirely satisfied, and that he regarded it as the best thing for her.

My sister, Annie, then spoke to us for some considerable time. The conversation was long and fluent throughout, and contained innumerable family references. She told us that Aunt Agnes was very ill indeed (this was correct), and this particular relative died shortly afterwards. She referred also to my sister, Gertie, adding, decisively, "she will not live." My sister, Gertie, died the following year. Before she left the circle she (Annie) described how she had met my father (who was particularly fond of her) when he had passed over. She told me that he was there and would speak to me.

Shortly after the "voice" of my father spoke to me. It was certainly *his* voice in every characteristic. His opening words were indicative of his peculiar directness. They were: "Herbert, your father, Daniel Bradley." The conversation which ensued with me, and also with my wife, with Pat, his grandson, and with Valiantine, was natural, and not only was it fluent, but it teemed with evidence of personality and intimate knowledge of family affairs. His voice gained in strength after the first minute. The intonation and manner of speech were identical with those he possessed on earth. Not only did he give many evidential points regarding his life on

earth, but he also gave many evidential points in regard to my visit to Ireland, mentioning Loch Rae, Connemara and other parts, which I had recently visited. These matters I think he referred to particularly because they related to events which had taken place since his passing over. When he was on earth he had met Valiantine on one, or perhaps two, occasions. I would regard as a significant point the fact that during the time he was talking to myself and my wife, and also to Pat, on two or three occasions he went over to Valiantine, and chatted with him fluently and quickly, the last word of each sentence in the conversation joining in with the replies of Valiantine.

This was a remarkable sitting for phenomena, *but* it must be remembered particularly that there were three mediums present: Valiantine, my wife and myself; also the fourth sitter, Pat, has, in my opinion, very considerable psychic powers—possibly greater even than the other three sitters.

## II

*Saturday, February 5, 1927.*

On this date, Lord Charles Hope, with whom it had been arranged that Valiantine should spend a month of his stay in England, had his first sitting under the mediumship of Valiantine. The sitting took place after dinner, and there were in all only four present: Valiantine, Mrs. Bradley, myself, and Lord Charles Hope.

After two minutes the "voice" of Dr. Barnett greeted us.

Lord Charles Hope had recently received from Australia an instrument called a Shastaphone. This instrument was alleged to have been designed through a psychic communication, and was stated to be an improvement on the ordinary trumpets and megaphones which were being used at the moment at "direct voice" séances.

Dr. Barnett was asked a question regarding the Shastaphone, and he replied that he had examined it and that it might be tried. Incidentally I might mention that the subsequent few experiments with the Shastaphone were not very successful.

Various of the Guides manifested: Bert Everett, Hawk Chief, Black Foot, Kokum, and Pat O'Brien, who had

many conversations with those sitting in the circle. My father, Daniel Bradley, spoke to us all, and told Lord Charles Hope that he had endeavoured to get through at a private circle held by him. He volunteered a certain reference to Glasgow.

Warren Clarke spoke to us all. To Lord Charles Hope a reference was made to "Aunt Mary," and also a spirit, purporting to be his father, spoke to him.

During the intervals between the "voices" manifesting I had put several records on the gramophone. At certain periods various of the records were suddenly stopped and then played in a peculiar manner at odd times.

### III

*Sunday, February 6, 1927.*

On this day Valiantine, who had only arrived from America a few days previously, was not at all well. He could not eat and was apparently liverish. Despite his condition a sitting was held in the evening, at which were present, in addition to himself, Mrs. Bradley, Mr. P. G. Wodehouse, Mr. Dennis Mackail, and the Baroness de Kakucs.

After a few records on the gramophone had been played, the "voice" of Dr. Barnett was heard, giving the usual short greeting.

During the evening the following Guides manifested: Black Foot, speaking on four or five occasions; Hawk Chief, speaking in a loud voice and giving a war whoop; Kokum, who spoke and afterwards whirled the luminous trumpets in the air; Pat O'Brien, chatting to each of the sitters—his "voice" floating round the circle, and Bert Everett, who said a very few words.

The luminous trumpet was lifted, and a very faint "voice" attempted to speak to Mr. P. G. Wodehouse, saying that it was his grandfather. This "voice," however, was so faint that identity could not be established.

A "voice," announcing itself to be James Burnett, mentioned the name of Spragg, who wished to communicate. James Burnett was unknown to Mr. Wodehouse, but Spragg was recognized as the name of a friend. Later a "voice" announcing itself to be Spragg came through, but was not at all clear in answering any questions which were put, and could only hold the conversation for a very short period.

A "voice" spoke to Dennis Mackail, but was so indistinct that in this case again no identity could be established.

Another "voice" spoke to Mr. Dennis Mackail, purporting to be his Uncle Phil, but although the name was given the conversation contained no evidential points.

Two attempts were made by "voices" to speak to the Baroness de Kakucs, neither of which, however, succeeded in establishing identity.

The "voice" of George Hunt addressed Mrs. Bradley (his daughter) and spoke with her for a short time. He referred to his paintings (several of which hang in Dorincourt), and, in answer to questions which were put to him, said that he was still painting landscapes. (His work was chiefly landscape painting.) Mrs. Bradley asked him whether he remembered all the various paintings he had done on earth, and he replied: "Yes—and I remember a few of the interiors which I painted." This conversation was good and evidential, certain information being given which was known only to Mrs. Bradley and to myself.

A "voice," using the luminous trumpet, announced itself to be my mother. The "voice" was faint, and after a few short sentences or so became quite indistinct. She addressed me affectionately, and said that the conditions appeared to her to be difficult, and not what she had expected. She told me that she was quite happy, and that my sister, Gertrude, could not survive her illness. My mother added that Dan (her husband) was with her.

The "voice" of my sister, Annie, spoke with us. She was quite distinct, although her tones were fainter than usual.

A "voice," announcing itself as William Archer, came through and spoke for a few seconds with Mr. Wodehouse, and also with me. He discussed his present sphere, and said: "On the other side literature still goes on." He told us that he continued to write. Allusion was made by him to "The Green Goddess"—his play—and to the way in which writers on this plane are helped by those on the other side.

On the whole, this evening was a somewhat poor one. Considering the physical condition of the medium, however, perhaps the results were better than might have been anticipated.

## IV

Tuesday, February 8, 1927.

At this sitting there were present: George Valiantine, myself, Mrs. Bradley, Lord Charles Hope, and Mr. E. Clepham Palmer, of *The Daily News*.

The sitting was a particularly poor one.

After three gramophone records had been played, the "voice" of Dr. Barnett was heard, and later on the "voices" of Valiantine's Guides, "Black Foot" and "Hawk Chief," who spoke in loud tones and gave a war whoop. Also "Pat O'Brien," speaking a few short sentences to various of the sitters, and later "Honey," speaking from the floor. Cristo d'Angelo spoke a few words in Italian.

Warren Clarke (my brother-in-law) spoke a few words to me and to my wife, and then a "voice," announcing itself as Leila Marvin, addressed Lord Charles Hope, saying that she was also helping "MacDonell." Shortly afterwards another "voice" endeavoured to manifest, but this "voice" was so incoherent that it was impossible to recognize what was said.

In regard to the "voice" Leila Marvin, it might be mentioned that Lord Charles Hope had, prior to this occasion, personally experimented with a few personal friends in the endeavour to obtain the "direct voice," without the assistance of any outside medium. On one occasion during these personal experiments a faint whispering "voice" was heard, giving the name Leila Marvin, and saying that she was his (Lord Charles Hope) Guide.

It must be mentioned that Mr. Noel Jaquin had also been experimenting personally with a few friends for this particular form of phenomenon, and had obtained certain results. At Mr. Jaquin's own private sittings a "voice" announcing itself as MacDonnell had spoken, telling him (Noel Jaquin) that he was his Guide.

## V

Thursday, February 10, 1927.

This sitting was held at Lord Charles Hope's flat in St. James's Place. There were present, in addition to George Valiantine, Mrs. Bradley, myself, Lord Charles Hope, the Countess Ahlefeldt-Laurvig (the wife of the

Danish Minister, referred to in "The Wisdom of the Gods"), and Mr. and Mrs. Noel Jaquin.

Three luminous trumpets were placed in the centre of the circle.

Before any "voice" was heard two of the trumpets were lifted and wafted about the circle.

Of the spirit guides, five distinct "voices" were heard speaking at various times: Dr. Barnett, Black Foot, Hawk Chief, Pat O'Brien, and Cristo D'Angelo, speaking in Italian.

A "voice," announcing itself as "K'ung-fu-T'zu" (the correct name for Confucius), spoke in Chinese to the Countess Ahlefeldt-Laurvig. The "voice" was speaking in what may have been ancient Chinese, but the Countess (who at one time had spent a considerable period in China) had difficulty in translating anything but a few odd phrases.

It should here be mentioned that the Confucius "voice" had previously, in New York, held long conversations with Dr. Neville Whymant, a distinguished linguist and student of Chinese.

Of the personal spirit "voices" which manifested, two spoke to the Countess, the first announcing itself as Oscar (her brother) who carried on a conversation (using the luminous trumpet) with her in Russian, and later on changing to French. A "voice" purporting to be her mother also had a short conversation with her. While this "voice" was manifesting, the luminous trumpet was used in a peculiarly delicate manner. It moved in a gentle and caressing manner.

Four different spirit "voices" spoke a few short sentences to Lord Charles Hope—one purporting to be his father, although I do not think anything of an evidential nature was volunteered. The second was "Leila Marvin," the voice which had manifested to him two days prior to this sitting. Another announced itself to be "May," and spoke to him in childish tones. It may be mentioned here that "May" had endeavoured to speak a few words at Lord Charles Hope's personal sittings. The fourth "voice" announced itself as "Fleet Foot," and stated that he was one of those who had attached himself to Lord Charles Hope's circle.

Three "voices" addressed Noel Jaquin, one announcing itself to be "Macdonell"—the Guide referred to in the sitting of February 8. Another introduced himself as the "Mandarin." He was, I understand, another

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"Guide" who had manifested on certain occasions at Mr. Jaquin's personal sittings. The third gave the name of "Basil." He was, I believe, a child of Mr. Jaquin's who had died.

The "voice" of Warren Clarke came through and spoke with me and also with my wife for a short time.

During the sitting eighteen distinct "voices" manifested, and Chinese, Russian and Italian were spoken.

## VI

*Friday, February 11, 1927.*

This sitting was held at Dorincourt. There were present: George Valiantine, Mrs. Bradley and myself, Mr. E. Clepham Palmer, Mrs. Gavin, Mrs. Barkell (the well-known clairvoyant and clairaudience trance medium), and Mr. C. V. L. Hooman.

The weather on this evening was particularly foggy, and the atmospheric conditions generally bad.

Several records were played upon the gramophone, and it was twenty minutes before any manifestation occurred. At the end of this time the luminous trumpet was taken up and whirled at a considerable speed over the heads of the sitters. It then fell to the ground.

After a considerable pause, during which nothing happened, I suggested that I should retire from the circle, and that if, after a further quarter of an hour, no results were obtained, Mr. Clepham Palmer should follow me. This he did.

The remainder of the circle continued to sit for a short time and then the "voice" of Dr. Barnett was heard speaking a few short sentences. A "voice" afterwards announced itself as "White Hawk," saying two or three words only to Mrs. Barkell. "White Hawk," it should be mentioned, is Mrs. Barkell's control.

"Dr. Barnett" then said the sitting must close.

## VII

*Saturday, February 12, 1927.*

The sitting on the previous evening having proved a failure, I had invited Mrs. Gavin (the well-known lady golfer, at one time runner-up for the American Championship), Mrs. Barkell, and Mr. C. V. L. Hooman (the golfer and Kent cricketer).

In addition to the above, there were present George Valiantine, Mrs. Bradley, and my young son, Pat.

As I had a considerable amount of writing to attend to on that evening, I did not sit, and spent the evening working in the drawing-room, which adjoins my study, in which the sittings are always held. From the drawing-room I could hear several of the "voices" speaking with the sitters. At one period during the sitting I left the room in which I sat for a few minutes, and as I passed the study the "voice" of Bert Everett called out, in loud tones: "Why don't you come in here, Mr. Bradley?" This, certainly, was an extremely valuable point of evidence of supernormal vision. None of the sitters in the circle could have known that I was passing the door exactly at that moment. I replied to Bert Everett from outside the door that I had too much work to do, and then I laughingly carried on a short conversation with this "voice." This incident was quite a remarkable one.

I had asked Mrs. Gavin and also Mr. Hooman if they would take notes of what transpired during the sitting, and let me have their reports.

#### MRS. GAVIN'S REPORT

After one gramophone record was played we said the Lord's Prayer, and immediately afterwards "Dr. Barnett" spoke. We asked him why the sitting had been abortive the previous evening, and he somewhat reluctantly told us that the controversy at dinner had made it almost impossible for them to get through. He also said that the atmospheric conditions—fog—were bad. Dr. Barnett then told us that he would try and help the other spirits to get through.

From then, almost without a pause, for an hour and a half spirit after spirit came through.

First of all numbers of Valiantine's "Guides" and friends: Bert Everett, Kokum, Black Foot, Hawk Chief, and Bobby Worrall. None of these spirits stayed long. Whenever Kokum manifested, the trumpets were whirled and floated round the room.

After this "Honey" talked for quite a long time with Pat, and at the end of the conversation could be heard splashing about the water in a bowl, which, at Pat's request, had been placed in the middle of the circle.

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When the lights were turned on at the close of the sitting the water marks were to be seen on the carpet.

Soon afterwards a rather indistinct "voice" announced itself as "White Hawk" (Mrs. Barkell's control). He spoke to Mrs. Barkell, but nothing evidential was given.

"Annie" (Mr. Bradley's sister) came through and spoke to us all in turn.

Then came, in quick succession, "Aunt Carrie" (an aunt of Mrs. Bradley) and Dan Bradley (Mr. Dennis Bradley's father), Mrs. Bradley remarking that his "voice" was *exactly* "as it used to be."

Two spirit "voices" spoke to Mr. Hooman, but were too faint to be recognizable.

A "voice" then addressed me, saying it was my sister. As both my sisters are alive I thought there must be some mistake, until I remembered that I had had a sister who died just before I was born. I asked if she were Dorothy, and she replied "Yes," and asked me to give her love to Mother, adding that she was now grown up on the spirit side, and that it was a most beautiful time.

A "voice" then addressed itself to Mrs. Barkell, announcing itself as "Allen McKittrick." This was an evidential point, as Mrs. McKittrick had written to Mr. Bradley asking for the opportunity of a sitting. This, however, could not be arranged; therefore the son sent his mother messages and love.

"Dr. Barnett" then told us that we all had "voice" power, especially Mr. Hooman, and that if we continued to sit we should get the "voices." He (Dr. Barnett) laughed heartily when Pat was anxious to know if he included him.

"Bert Everett" here gave a tremendous shout for Mr. Bradley, who carried on a conversation with him from outside the door. Mr. Bradley told "Bert Everett" that he could be heard in the Portsmouth Road.

One of the Indian "Guides" afterwards sang loudly.

"Warren Clarke" spoke to us and told us that he was helping Mr. Bradley with his work; he also gave messages to Mrs. Bradley.

A "voice" announcing itself as her grandfather then talked with Mrs. Barkell, in regard to some contracts concerning her husband's business. He asked for Mrs. Barkell's husband by name, and the conversation was a particularly evidential one.

Then the marvellous phenomena took place of two

trumpets in the air at the same time, and two "voices" speaking simultaneously. Mr. Valiantine was also speaking to a sitter at the same time.

Soon after these incidents "Dr. Barnett" told us that the power was going.

"Bert Everett" closed the sitting with a long and beautiful prayer.

As for myself, I must note two curious incidents. One, that of my sister speaking. My husband remembered that a year previously we had agreed how evidential it would be if my sister would speak, as practically no one outside the family would know of her existence. The matter, however, had completely vanished from my mind for a year. The second, I had remarked to Mr. Hooman that I thought perhaps an aunt of mine, named Dorothy (on the other side), would probably come and speak, as I was continually impressed with the name "Dorothy." Then, quite unexpectedly, my sister Dorothy manifested.

(Signed) MARGARET GAVIN.

#### MR. C. V. L. HOOMAN'S REPORT

Notes and observations in relation to a sitting held at Dorincourt, Kingston Vale, on Saturday, February 12, 1927. Medium: George Valiantine. In addition to the medium there were five sitters present, and their names are mentioned in order reading from the medium's left: Mrs. Bradley (who attended to the gramophone), Pat Bradley, Mrs. W. A. Gavin, Mr. C. V. L. Hooman, Mrs. Barkell.

Two trumpets were used, each of which was furnished with luminous bands. One of these trumpets had, in addition, two rows of luminous spots, while the other was provided with a luminous crescent-shaped mark.

At about 8.45 p.m. all lights were turned out, as soon as the sitters had taken their places. The gramophone was started by Mrs. Bradley, and almost immediately I observed a very bright spirit light which passed before me from right to left. Shortly afterwards there was another occurrence of a similar nature.

Almost immediately after the first record had come to an end, "Dr. Barnett" spoke, the "voice" coming from the centre of the circle, on a level with the floor. Mrs. Bradley asked "Dr. Barnett" to explain the nature of the influence which had rendered the sitting on the

previous evening abortive. "Dr. Barnett" stated that the conditions were what he described as very "disagreeable." He said that the conversation before the sitting was a most unfortunate one, coming, as it did, immediately before communication was sought, and that the atmospheric conditions were very bad in addition. These two facts rendered communication impossible.

Mrs. Barkell approached "Dr. Barnett" with reference to the case of a woman suffering from uterine trouble. "Dr. Barnett" expressed his sympathy, and advised the use of "blood-root." On the question being raised as to the advisability of "operation," "Dr. Barnett" said that when practising on the earth plane he was always adverse to this course of action. "Dr. Barnett" then said that he would endeavour to help through those spirits who were waiting to communicate. He also said that the conditions were quite satisfactory. When opening, "Dr. Barnett" had greeted us all very warmly, and he struck the writer as being a very wonderful and genial spirit.

Shortly after this, one of our trumpets was raised and whirled at a tremendous rate just above the heads of the sitters, sometimes descending and touching some of them.

Then the spirits of "Black Foot," "Hawk Chief," and "Dodo" manifested and spoke in turn for a short time.

Very shortly afterwards the spirits of "Bobbie" and "Honey" manifested and spoke to Pat Bradley. Pat had brought into the séance room a bowl of water, which had been placed in the fireplace. Pat invited "Bobbie" to play with the water, but this he appeared disinclined to do. The bowl was then removed from the fireplace and placed in the centre of the circle by Mrs. Barkell. Little "Honey" laughed and played with the water for some time. The splashing could be distinctly heard, and after the sitting had terminated I observed many splashes on the carpet. The bowl was close to my feet and a considerable distance away from the medium.

Then the tremendous "voice" of "Kokum" was heard high above the heads of the sitters, but I was unable to catch much of what he said.

The spirit of "Dorothy" (a sister who had passed over prior to Mrs. Gavin's birth) then spoke to Mrs. Gavin, through the trumpet. "Dorothy" said she was working hard to help Mrs. Gavin and that she would never forsake her.

A spirit, thought to be that of "White Hawk," spoke

to Mrs. Barkell through the trumpet, calling her "Squaw," but again I was unable to catch much of what was said.

To Mrs. Barkell also came the spirit of "Will" (her father-in-law), speaking through the trumpet. This spirit also spoke to me, saying that "Addie" (my beloved wife) was with him. Shortly after this, "Addie" made her presence known to me through the trumpet, and very audible kisses were heard through the trumpet. The trumpet was rubbed softly up and down the side of my face, and my arms and knees were firmly touched by it. Kisses were also heard when spirits were speaking to Mrs. Bradley, Mrs. Barkell, Mrs. Gavin and Pat.

The spirit of "Bert Everett" came and literally screamed from the neighbourhood of the ceiling. This was heard by Mr. Bradley, who was sitting in the next room, and who came and talked with this spirit through the door.

"Bert Everett" spoke for some time by "direct voice" to Mrs. Bradley, Mr. Bradley and to Pat. On request he also spoke a few words to Pat in his natural voice. Bert Everett's "voice" is, on most occasions, particularly shrill. He says that he uses these falsetto tones because it is easier for him to pick up the necessary vibrations to manifest.

"Warren Clarke," "Mr. Dan Bradley," "Aunt Carrie" and "Grandmamma" (Mrs. Bradley's mother-in-law) also spoke to Mrs. Bradley and to Pat.

The spirit of one "Alan McKittrick" came and spoke to Mrs. Barkell (this spirit is, I gather, a relation of a friend of hers).

"Addie" came a second time, and made her presence known through the trumpet.

My mother also manifested in the same way.

"Addie" also manifested to Mrs. Gavin and to Mrs. Barkell. About this time "Annie" (Mr. Bradley's sister) came and spoke for a short time to Mrs. Bradley.

Towards the end of the sitting both trumpets were lifted and two spirits spoke simultaneously, but I was unable to identify them.

Just before the end of the sitting "Bert Everett" came a second time and said quite a long prayer for us, from the beauty of which his squeaky "voice" in no way detracted.

In closing the sitting, "Dr. Barnett" asked us if we had any questions, and, in discussing the possibilities of

mediumship with Pat, showed kindly amusement at the boy's enthusiasm for his personal development.

"Dr. Barnett" stated that both Mrs. Gavin and myself possess considerable "power" and advised us to sit for development.

I have omitted to mention that at the beginning of the sitting "Pat O'Brien" came through and spoke for a short time.

With a few most kindly words of encouragement and with his blessing "Dr. Barnett" closed the sitting. On our part we expressed as well as we were able our thankfulness to him for his great assistance, and our deep gratitude to all those spirits who had worked so hard to manifest themselves to us.

I did not notice the time at which the sitting terminated, but my impression is that it lasted about one and a half hours.

### *Observations*

The power of the mediumship is tremendous, and the strength of the "voices" is truly wonderful. I feel I cannot adequately express my thankfulness to Almighty God that I have been allowed such an amazing experience. My gratitude to those through whose kindness I have been enabled to enjoy this marvellous demonstration is very real.

The behaviour of Pat Bradley during the sitting amazed me. The natural, matter-of-fact manner in which he carried on his conversations with his spirit friends was, for a boy of his age, to me quite wonderful.

A point which struck me as of importance, so far as the "sceptic" is concerned, is the following: The trumpets were within easy reach of me at the side of the circle farthest from Mr. Valiantine, and quite out of his reach. Several times during the sitting the spirits, when replacing the trumpets, seemed to lose control, with the result that the trumpets fell over, the upper movable ends becoming detached. On each occasion I myself replaced the trumpets in an upright position, adjusting the upper ends as necessary.

(Signed) C. V. L. HOOMAN.

A day or so afterwards I received a letter from Mrs. Barkell, as follows:

"I should like you to know that when my father-in-

law came to me, he gave me a message for my husband, saying: 'Tell Will I am helping him and the contracts will be all right.' I thought this meant some work my husband was already on. But since then two other contracts have arrived, and which at the time seemed most unlikely. Also, Mrs. Vlasto's daughter sent a message to her mother, calling her by a name unknown to me, all of which Mrs. Vlasto tells me is quite correct. Mr. McKittrick was also very impressed by the message sent from his brother."

## VIII

*Sunday, February 13, 1927.*

At this sitting there were present: George Valiantine, Mrs. Bradley, Miss Winifred Graham (the novelist), Mrs. Graham, her mother, and Miss Faith Bevan.

I did not attend the sitting but continued my work in the drawing-room adjoining the study, during which time I heard many of the "voices" conversing with the sitters.

The sitting was an evidential and successful one. Miss Winifred Graham took notes of the various "voices" which manifested. She told me that of the Guides, Dr. Barnett, Kokum, Bert Everett and Bobbie Worrall all spoke. The "voices" of Mrs. Graham's husband, her mother and her brother talked to her.

Miss Bevan's mother and brother both manifested to her, and discussed family matters with her.

My sister Annie and Warren Clarke spoke for some time to Mrs. Bradley.

During the sitting Miss Graham recorded that a Chinese spirit had sung two quaint Chinese songs; also that the two "voices" were heard speaking in Italian and Spanish.

## IX

*Monday, February 14, 1927.*

This sitting was the last one I recorded during Valiantine's short stay at Dorincourt in 1927. There were present on this occasion: George Valiantine, Mrs. Bradley and myself, Mr. Dennis Neilson-Terry, Miss Marjorie Gordon, Mr. P. G. Wodehouse and Lord Charles Hope.

Four records were played on the gramophone before

any manifestation occurred. A very faint "voice" was then heard speaking independently. This "voice" was so faint that it was impossible to identify it. The conditions did not appear to be good. "Bert Everett" gave a short greeting. When asked what the conditions were like he made no reply.

Of the other Guides, a few short sentences were spoken by Dr. Barnett, Hawk Chief, Kokum, Black Foot, and Cristo D'Angelo.

A somewhat faint "voice," with a peculiar intonation, announced itself as "K'ung-fu-T'zu," and spoke a few words in what might be presumed to be Chinese.

After this another and entirely different "voice," speaking in staccato pidgin-English, manifested.

A little later this same "voice" sang a peculiar little Chinese song.

A "voice" then announced itself as "Pedro," and spoke a word or two. He afterwards sang a song in Portuguese.

Of the personal spirits manifesting, my father, Dan Bradley, spoke to me, and also to my wife. His "voice" was particularly distinct and characteristic.

A "voice" purporting to be his grandfather, spoke to Mr. Neilson-Terry. This "voice," however, was not distinct and I do not think anything of any evidential value was given.

To Miss Marjorie Gordon a "voice" announced itself to be "Aunt Clara"—the name was volunteered. She said that she had passed away fourteen years ago.

A "voice" attempted to converse with Mr. P. G. Wodehouse, but was quite unintelligible.

Four separate "voices" addressed themselves to Lord Charles Hope, one purporting to be his father, another saying it was "Howard," a third announcing itself as "Fleet Foot"—a Guide—and the fourth as "Naisha," another Guide, who had attached itself to Lord Charles Hope's personal circle.

Another "voice" which manifested was Harry Pelissier. This "voice" was quite distinct and characteristic, and spoke with several of the sitters. Whilst he was conversing he laughed considerably, and just as he had done on previous occasions when he had manifested, while the gramophone was playing, it was stopped suddenly, little tricks being played with it. I was personally in charge of the gramophone, and after a record had been adjusted I closed the lid, and rested

my arm on top. Therefore I can vouch for the supernormality of this particular incident.

The sitting, however, on the whole appeared to me to be rather mixed, and very little personal evidence was obtained.

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1927.

During the time Valiantine was staying with Lord Charles Hope I attended two or three sittings, but I took no notes of the phenomena.

One particular incident, however, is worth recording.

Mrs. Bradley and myself were having tea one afternoon with the Countess Ahlefeldt-Laurvig, at the Danish Embassy. While we were there she showed us an ancient Chinese shell—circular in shape and weighing not less than three or four pounds. At the top of this shell circular folds ended in a small hollow mouthpiece. The Countess told us that it was used in China as a horn, and was blown on occasions as a "call." She asked me to try and blow it, but I could produce no sound whatever from it. Later two or three other guests made the endeavour, but also failed. It appears that this horn can be blown only by a Chinese after he has acquired the art of blowing it.

The Countess suggested that as Chinese had been spoken at the Valiantine sittings on certain occasions, this shell might be placed in the centre of the circle at the next sitting held.

On one afternoon at his flat there were present, in addition to Lord Charles Hope and George Valiantine, the Countess Ahlefeldt-Laurvig, Mrs. Bradley, myself and one or two other guests.

Various "voices" manifested, and at one period during the sitting, from high up in the room, this shell horn was blown, and the peculiar notes were rendered in the correct Chinese fashion.

I remember that when this horn was blown the sitters were slightly nervous, as, in view of the weight of the shell, in the event of its falling on anyone present undoubtedly serious injury would have been caused.

When the sitting was over, we found that this shell had been dropped *outside* the circle, behind two of the sitters.

While Valiantine was staying with me, my friend,

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Lord Dewar, who had sat with him on two or three occasions at Dorincourt, invited us to spend a day with him at The Homestall, East Grinstead. The late Lord Dewar was, of course, one of the most famous breeders of live stock in England. His beautiful house is unique. It is a twelfth century building, which has been added to in parts, and it is believed that John o' Gaunt lived there at some time. The walls are, naturally, the immensely thick ones of the period.

During the afternoon we held a sitting in one of the oldest rooms of The Homestall.

No gramophone or music of any kind was played.

There were five sitters in all: Valiantine, Lord Dewar, Mrs. Bradley, myself and my son Pat.

It was found that the light could not properly be excluded on account of the curtains not quite meeting across the deep silled windows. Small streaks of light were therefore penetrating into the room. Despite this, however, this sitting was a remarkably good one.

In all, eight "voices" manifested. Four of these "voices" were personal friends and relatives of Lord Dewar—three speaking in most distinct and resonant Scotch accents.

Lord Dewar was always a fluent and witty conversationalist, and two of the "voices" speaking to him had long conversations lasting from ten to fifteen minutes each, during which time Lord Dewar told me that he had obtained many evidences of the personalities of those with whom he had spoken.

Lord Dewar was enormously impressed and pleased with the results, especially as the sitting was really a promiscuous one.

In my opinion the atmosphere of the house and the room in which we sat were particularly good for psychic experiments, and, of course, the circle was a particularly strong combination. I have noticed repeatedly that whenever my son Pat is sitting the phenomena are exceptional.

Towards the end of Valiantine's stay, at the request of Professor Ernesto Bozzano, I invited the Marquis Centurioni Scotto and Mr. and Mrs. P. E. Rossi to Dorincourt. Three very remarkable sittings were held, at which some exceptional communications were made in Italian. I will refer to these in a later section of this book when recounting the experiences in Italy in 1929.

## CHAPTER II

### GRAMOPHONE RECORDS OF VOICES

*A first experiment—A gramophone record disposes of hypnotism theory—The arrangements—Eight individual voices speak—No control—Deductions.*

IN the spring of 1927 Lord Charles Hope and I made our first experiment to see if we could obtain gramophone records of some of the spirit "voices." The suggestion, as a matter of fact, was originally made to me by the Countess Ahlefeldt-Laurvig. It was an experiment of scientific value, because if we succeeded it would prove indisputably the actual physical reality of the "voices" and dispose finally of the theory of hypnotism. *You cannot hypnotize a gramophone.*

We made arrangements with the Columbia Gramophone Company to do the recording. The experiment was made in Lord Charles Hope's flat in St. James's. A special telephone line was laid on by the Post Office from Lord Charles's flat to the Columbia Gramophone Company's recording house in Petty Frances Street. Outside the séance room there were stationed two of the Columbia Company's assistants, giving the signals for the various times to record. It will be realized that it was a first experiment, carried through under considerable difficulties.

In the séance room there were present Lord Charles Hope, Mrs. Bradley, myself, and George Valiantine. These records were taken through a megaphone, and then through the telephone wires on to the recording machines. None of us had the faintest idea what we should obtain, which voices would speak, or indeed, if any would succeed in speaking at all. *Eight individual "voices," however, did speak*—three in English, one in what sounded like an Indian dialect, one in Hindustani, one in Italian and two in Chinese. These Columbia records were made, and they remain in my possession.

The "voices," although quite loud, are not par-

ticularly distinct, but all the English can be understood, and—a very important point—the other languages, parts of which have been translated, were unknown to any of the sitters present when they manifested. Now, if one such experiment has achieved success, the significance should be realized; it has proved that each of the hundreds of spirit "voices" which have hitherto spoken can be permanently recorded.

It should be mentioned that this experiment was made when Valiantine was not controlled in any way. Control was not suggested either by Lord Charles Hope or myself. Our purpose was to attempt the somewhat ambitious experiment of seeing if supernormal sound could be registered by mechanical means. It was rather an expensive experiment, because the cost of the special wiring to the Telephone Company, and the recording by the Columbia Company, amounted to a very considerable sum, which Lord Charles and I shared.

As to the records, it must be clearly stated that we have no evidence whatever of the personality of the "voices" recorded. Six of these were Valiantine's various "guides," which have attached themselves to his séances. The attempt to record Hindustani—which was incomprehensible—was made by a "guide" alleged to have attached himself to Lord Charles Hope's private sittings.

The Ancient Chinese "voice" was that of the alleged "Confucius voice" which has conversed at length with Dr. Neville Whymant at various sittings.

Lord Charles Hope quite rightly and logically considers that this interesting experiment, except as a proof that the "voices" were objective and not hallucinatory, brought forward no proof of survival. This is quite true. What it did prove, however, is this: The registration of the sound of the various Valiantine "guides" voices is either supernormal or all these "guide voices" during the last eight years have been produced by him fraudulently, and were, *ipso facto*, also produced fraudulently by him on this occasion. For the sake of argument, assuming fraud, how then was it possible for him to produce the Confucius "voice," which was afterwards recognized on the gramophone record by Dr. Neville Whymant as the same in accent as that of the "Confucius voice" which had previously spoken with him and carried on illuminating and cultured conversations? I can personally attest to the Confucius voice,

because I have heard it speak on several occasions before these gramophone records were taken.

So far as the "guide voices" were concerned, they were identical in tone and characteristics with the various communications I have received from them during the hundreds of séances recorded in my books.

## CHAPTER III

### THE VOICE OF CONFUCIUS

*Dr. Neville Whymant—A distinguished scholar—A séance with Valiantine—The Chinese flute—"The Philosopher-Master-K'ung"—Diction and intonation—A remarkable test—The doubtful passage—The Confucius gramophone record.*

#### I

SOME of the most remarkable evidence in my experience is that provided by Dr. Neville Whymant in the amazing story of his conversations at direct voice séances with a communicator purporting to be the great Chinese philosopher, Confucius, who died in the year 479 B.C. Dr. Whymant is one of the outstanding authorities on Chinese history, philosophy and ancient literature. Not only does he speak the language fluently, but he is also a master of several other Oriental and European tongues.

He was for many years lecturer in Chinese at Oxford University, and speaks thirty languages and a considerable number of dialects. While staying in New York, where he was engaged in taking charge of the Oriental Department of a new Encyclopædia, he was invited by Judge W. M. Cannon, a famous lawyer, to attend a séance held at the latter's residence, the medium being Valiantine. Subsequently the doctor attended some half a dozen séances, the details of which he recorded. In my opinion these conversations, carried on in Archaic Chinese, represent perhaps one of the most extraordinary tests ever made in psychical research.

He was told by his hosts that voices had manifested in English, including dialect English, as well as in Italian, French, and other European tongues. He was not invited with a view to passing judgment on the evidence. They had received, at the sittings, testimony which they regarded as conclusive: for example, a Portuguese voice had spoken, giving certain information, as well as a name and address; a letter was sent to the address, and the reply which was received confirmed the statement of the alleged spirit voice.

Subsequently, however, Oriental voices had come through, which none of the sitters could interpret. They had therefore invited Dr. Whymant to attend in his capacity as Oriental linguist.

"I was slightly amused at the invitation," states Dr. Whymant, "because, though by no means an enemy of spiritualism, I had never found time to study it; so I looked forward to an evening of enjoyable relaxation. I anticipated that, after various voices had spoken in the dark, somebody would disclose details of some highly skilful and elaborate hoax."

He duly attended the séance; several voices spoke in English on very personal matters to members of the assembly. Some of the communications were so intimate that, said the lecturer, "I felt like an eavesdropper, but luckily the darkness covered all blushes."

Next came the name "Christo di Angelo," pronounced in the Italian manner "*Chreesto di Ahnjelo*"; then followed a communication in perfect Italian. "I translated the message to one of the sitters; it was as follows: 'Tell the honoured lady she has broken her promise to me—to learn sufficient Italian to speak to me in my own tongue; she still speaks to me in Spanish, and it displeases me.'" The lady acknowledged the broken promise, and later the voice dropped into an obscure dialect which Dr. Whymant afterwards proved to have been Sicilian.

Then came more and more English voices. Suddenly out of the darkness was heard a "weird, crackling, broken little sound, which at once carried my mind straight back to China. It was the sound of a flute, rather poorly played, such as can be heard in the streets of the Celestial Land but nowhere else. Then followed in a low, but very audible voice, the words 'K'ung-fu-T'zu.'"

There were certain points about this utterance on which Dr. Whymant dwells. "K'ung-fu-T'zu," the Eastern form of Confucius, is a title rather than a name; it means "the Philosopher-Master-K'ung." The K'ung family are still extant in China, and descendants of the great philosopher have been drawing Government pensions for over two thousand years. Now the mere fact, says Dr. Whymant, of a communicator at a dark séance purporting to be Confucius was not in itself remarkable, as it is, of course, the most famous name in Chinese history, though few persons except Chinese could pronounce the name

correctly, as was done at the Valantine séance. For instance, the syllable "T'zu" or "T'ze" is extremely difficult to utter. It is not pronounced "Tzoo" or "Tzee" but "Ts"—a sound quite impossible to represent by English letters.

Dr. Whymant realized that whoever was speaking was a Chinese scholar, not only the diction but also the Chinese intonation being correctly reproduced.

"I said, 'Who are you?' Again came the voice, somewhat impatiently, 'K'ung-fu-T'zu.' The idea that it might be Confucius himself never occurred to me. I had imagined that it might be somebody desirous of discussing the life and philosophy of the great Chinese teacher." Determined to test the matter to the full, Dr. Whymant said in Chinese, with the customary ceremonial phrases, "What was your personal name?" The reply came: "K'iu." The fact of Confucius having the personal name of "K'iu" is fairly well known, at least to scholars, so that this piece of evidence, though interesting, was not by any means conclusive. He then asked, "What was your popular name when fourteen years of age?" Again came the correct reply, with the correct intonation—a piece of information which is very little known, and the voice then discussed a certain difficult passage of the Chinese classics which had been written, or at least edited, by Confucius.

A remarkable test was applied by Dr. Whymant, who explained that among the most famous writings of the illustrious philosopher was a certain passage which appears to be incorrectly written, as its meaning is obscure. He decided to seek information as to the correct interpretation of this piece of writing, believing that it did not represent the true words of Confucius, but that in the course of editing by subsequent writers its meaning had become distorted. Dr. Whymant therefore asked Confucius the following leading question: "'There is among your writings a passage wrongly written; should it not read thus?' At this point I began to quote as far as I knew, that is to say, to about the end of the first line. At once the words were taken out of my mouth, and the whole passage was recited in Chinese, exactly as it is recorded in the standard words of reference. After a pause of about fifteen seconds, the passage was again repeated, this time with certain alterations which gave it a new meaning. 'Thus read,' said the voice, 'does not its meaning become plain?'"

Towards the end of this sentence, the voice became rapid and finally faded away.

At subsequent sittings Dr. Whymant carried on further conversations with the voice. On one occasion the communicator referred to certain work "which thou hast done for the Mongolians."

This appeared to relate to a small Mongolian Grammar which Dr. Whymant had put out, but which, however, had remained in obscurity. He states, "I was not known as the author of that particular work." On another occasion, after being absent through illness from one of the séances, it was reported that K'ung-fu-T'zu had manifested, and had attempted to speak in English; it was a halting, pedantic and stilted English, but it conveyed the idea that the communicator was annoyed at Dr. Whymant's absence. At the next séance at which Dr. Whymant was present, K'ung-fu-T'zu appeared again, and, omitting all ceremonious expressions, referred to his previous absence, saying, "the weed of sickness was growing beside thy door." The point about this phrase was that, although it occurs in ancient literature, the metaphor is no longer current in the Chinese speech.

The voice purporting to be Confucius spoke in a dialect no longer used in the Chinese Empire. Dr. Whymant states that he cannot say definitely that this was actually the language as spoken by Confucius two thousand four hundred years ago. There is no man living who knows precisely how Chinese was spoken in those far-off days. It is known how three thousand words were spoken a thousand years *after* Confucius. That is to say, we know their phonetic value. So far, however, after twenty-five years of research, there are only about twelve Chinese sounds of which it can be said we know definitely how the Chinese of the era of Confucius would have pronounced them. The voice heard by Dr. Whymant used these archaic sounds.

With regard to the test passage, the amended rendering of which was given by the voice, Dr. Whymant states there are very few Oriental scholars who had appreciated that a possible error had crept in, and there was only one who had made an attempt at the probable meaning. This particular scholar had put out a suggested correction in the form of a pamphlet, which was distributed to some half-dozen authorities. It was just conceivable that this rare and curious piece of knowledge might have reached New York, but if we assume fraud and postulate the

concealed presence of some Chinese scholar, passing himself off to the sitters as Confucius, it must have been somebody almost superhumanly expert. There were only six Chinese scholars whose knowledge and command of the language would have been sufficient to impress him with any idea of genuineness; none of these six, however, was in America at the time. It was overwhelmingly difficult to support the theory of fraud, although Dr. Whymant was not prepared to regard the evidence of the actual presence of Confucius as being established. His mind was open on the subject of spirit return; nevertheless, he felt it his duty to bring the facts before those who might have a far greater knowledge of psychic matters than himself.

## II

As I have related, in conjunction with Lord Charles Hope, I conducted a series of experiments with a view to obtaining gramophone records of direct voices, and amongst those records is one of the Confucius "voice."

This particular record is an extraordinary one. The voice has curious flute-like tones, which rise and fall, and sometimes break into a peculiar sing-song tone. It is unlike any voice I have ever heard, and I have played these records on innumerable occasions.

Dr. Whymant could only interpret a few sentences, because, unfortunately, the somewhat faint voice has become blurred in the recording. Dr. Whymant states, however, that he does recognize a number of the peculiar intonations, and explains that in the Chinese language the tonal values are of great importance. He states that if one could not hear what a Chinaman was actually saying, one could make a very good guess at the meaning by the rise and the fall of the voice. For instance, three peculiar notes rising up the scale mean only one thing in Chinese, namely "Come in." He states, with regard to the gramophone record, that he can gather the meaning of the recorded speech by the tonal values, but in the absence of perfectly recorded diction, he considers it would be better not to attempt to interpret it by means of the intonation, as passages not definitely translatable would then come within the region of guess-work.

Except for the few sentences he could not translate of the "K'ung-fu-T'zu" voice, he states that were he to

interpret the message as he believed it to be by the tonal values, the result might be astonishing.

It is unquestionable that from the records meticulously kept by Dr. Whymant of the series of sittings he held under the mediumship of George Valiantine, that the "K'ung-fu-T'zu" voice spoke with him, and that all the communications made by this voice were those of a great poet and scholar, and were delivered in Archaic Chinese. That this voice was not fraudulently produced is, to my mind, certain. I have known Valiantine intimately for eight years; he has lived in my house for months at a time. He is not an educated man. In point of fact he is semi-illiterate, and possesses no academic knowledge or culture. If Valiantine is so clever that for all these years he has posed as an illiterate man, while all the time he is really one of the most cultured scholars in the world, speaking German, French, Russian, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, idiomatic Welsh, Arabic and Archaic Chinese, then he is one of the most baffling psychological enigmas ever presented to students of psychical research.

I have heard the "K'ung-fu-T'zu" voice speaking on two or three occasions in Archaic Chinese. I have also heard the same "voice," with its peculiar intonation, speaking to me personally in English. The "voice" has spoken slowly, but with quite beautiful cadences. It possessed an extraordinary dignity. The few conversations I had with the "K'ung-fu-T'zu" voice in English were upon philosophy. The "voice" was impressive in its beauty of accent. . . . Valiantine could never have spoken in such tones. Nor could he have discussed such subjects.

The registration of this voice on a gramophone record, whether translatable or not, is, in my opinion, evidence of the supernormal. It is evidential because the communications were made in the same "voice" and tones as those recorded at length by Dr. Whymant, who afterwards recognized these tones as the same.

It must be remembered that Dr. Whymant was not present at the experimental séances at which this "voice" was recorded. It is evidential because I have heard the "voice" speak on several occasions, and have *also* recognized the tones. Therefore, I regard the gramophone records obtained at the one experiment which was made as of interesting scientific value.

# BOOK III

## GERMANY AND ITALY, 1929

### CHAPTER I

#### IN BERLIN

An invitation to Berlin—The question of remuneration—Frau von Dirksen—Arrival in Berlin—Negative sittings—Interference by sitters—I leave Berlin—Four weeks later—Accusations of fraud—Correspondence—No proof—Dr. Kröner appears—A rambling letter—False statements—Supposition versus proof—Dr. Kröner's report—A tissue of assumptions—Contradictions and untruths—Frau Kröner's report—She is frightened and shrieks out—The value of evidence—Analysis—Frau von Dirksen's report—Allegations without corroboration—The question of "real" proof—Frau von Dirksen's letter of thanks—False statements—Telegrams opened—A worthless report—Another waste of time and space—Professor Hans Driesch—Dr. Schwab—Dr. Quade—A fair criticism—Baron von L.—Dr. Kröner airs his opinions—Misstatements and false impressions—Valiantine returns the money—Frau von Dirksen in tears—Dr. Kröner's mentality—The so-called "direct proofs"—The discovery of nothing.

ON August 28, 1928, Mr. Florizel von Reuter, the well-known violinist, wrote to me saying that Dr. F. Quade, the President of the Berlin Society for Scientific Occultism, had asked him to approach me to find out whether there would be any possibility of inducing Valiantine to visit Berlin. He said that the Society would like to know under what conditions his visit might be arranged, that all expenses would be paid, and that it was merely a question of deciding upon the fees. Mr. von Reuter stated that Valiantine would find harmonious conditions to work under, as the Berlin Society was well advanced in psychic matters.

So far as I was concerned personally, my only reason for considering the proposal to hold a series of sittings in Germany was that so far in the history of Psychical

Research Germany possesses no records whatever of the phenomena of the "direct voice," and the researchers there have had no experience of this form of phenomena.

I replied to Mr. von Reuter, in a letter dated September 3, 1928, saying that it might be possible to induce Valiantine to come to Europe some time during the spring of the following year.

Quoting verbatim, I wrote, "With regard to the question of fees, it is, of course, a very expensive matter for Valiantine to come from America to Europe, and I do not think he would care to agree to go to Berlin unless I accompanied him. His first-class return fare from London to Berlin and hotel expenses would have to be paid, but I, of course, would pay my own expenses. I think Valiantine should be paid a fee of £100, which would go towards his general expenses in travelling from America to Europe. Perhaps you would write to Dr. Quade to this effect."

It is necessary to mention these preliminary communications because of what subsequently transpired.

A little later on I received a letter from Dr. F. Quade, in which he said: "A patroness, in the person of Frau von Dirksen, of Margaretenstrasse II, Berlin, would bear all the costs for Valiantine, and accommodate him in her own home, in which the sittings could be held. Frau von Dirksen also begs that you and your wife will be her guests during Mr. Valiantine's visit."

Mr. von Reuter called upon me in London and told me that it was quite possible the Germans might suggest that Valiantine should be controlled in some manner. I told him that although Valiantine had, on many occasions, sat under conditions of complete control, I personally disagreed with control, as I did not base my research work upon any physical phenomena which might take place, but only upon the mental evidences of survival which had been acquired. I also stated that if Valiantine went to Berlin he must sit there under the same conditions as he had sat with me for the past six years.

It was not until the end of April that Valiantine was free to make the journey to Europe, and he wrote to me saying that he would only be desirous of doing so if he were accompanied by his wife.

I wrote to Frau von Dirksen, whom I had not previously met, saying that it would be preferable for us to stay at an hotel, and only hold the sittings at her

house. Frau von Dirksen, however, insisted that we should stay with her in Berlin.

In reply to a letter from Dr. Quade, inquiring how many sittings could be held, and the number of sitters to be invited, I wrote on March 28, 1929, as follows:

"Among members of your Society who may be invited, I would like to point out that it is not advisable to ask two or three sceptics together, as this would create poor conditions. Of course you understand that actual antagonists *do* affect the vibrations, but open scepticism, while it does not assist the harmony, does not, as a rule, inhibit phenomena. Further, I must make it quite clear that it is impossible to say that any phenomena at all will take place. It is utterly impossible to guarantee to turn on the psychic tap. At the same time, the records of Valiantine do show that with him phenomena are frequent."

I also informed him, and wrote to Frau von Dirksen to the same effect, that as a new play of mine was being produced at the Arts Theatre in London it would not be possible for me to stay for more than one week in Berlin, but that my wife and Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine would remain on for the period which had been arranged—a fortnight.

Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine arrived in England from America on Friday, April 26. On their arrival they spent one day with me at Dorincourt, and then travelled straight to Berlin with me and my wife, arriving there on April 29. We were received by Frau von Dirksen with the utmost hospitality, and every courtesy was shown to us during the whole time of our stay there. While I appreciate the warmth of the hospitality, it was, perhaps, a trifle too generous for serious psychical research work. The sittings were held as usual in the evening, and on each occasion there was a large dinner-party, at which wines and liqueurs were served to a company of between sixteen and twenty guests. Only a very small minority of the guests—and none of Frau von Dirksen's family—had any knowledge whatever of psychics, and the atmosphere generally was that of a series of social functions. There was no semblance of the quiet passivity so essential in holding séances to obtain the "direct voice," which is the most sensitive of all forms of phenomena.

The first sitting was held after dinner, on the night of our arrival, at about 9.15 p.m., Valiantine and I sitting with six Germans. Various of Valiantine's Guides—Dr. Barnett, Bert Everett, and others—spoke independently, and also a spirit voice, somewhat indistinct, speaking with difficulty, addressed Frau von Dirksen on two or three occasions in German. What the "voice" said, or was endeavouring to say, neither Valiantine nor I knew, since neither of us can speak German. During the sitting Frau von Dirksen, who was somewhat emotional and excited, repeatedly said to me, with the utmost sincerity: "I can never thank you enough, Mr. Bradley, for bringing Mr. Valiantine to Germany!" Despite Frau von Dirksen's thanks, however, I regarded this sitting as an extremely poor one. The "voices" were weak, and it was apparent to me that the power could only be sustained with considerable difficulty. I told the sitters afterwards that, viewed in comparison with the sustained fluency which is usual at the Valiantine sittings, under good conditions, I regarded this sitting as comparatively negative. Frau von Dirksen, however, appeared to be enthusiastic about the results.

I was somewhat amused when Frau von Dirksen naïvely told me that before I came to Berlin she made inquiries about me through the German diplomatic circles, and that she was informed by the British Embassy that I was regarded as a man of supreme honesty.

At the second sitting, the phenomena which took place were of a similar nature.<sup>1</sup>

After the second sitting, Dr. Kröner made the suggestion to Valiantine that he should submit to control during a sitting. Valiantine replied that he would agree, but must stipulate that in this case everyone present should also be controlled, as a justifiable precaution against any unfair tricks which might be attempted by sceptics. Valiantine's suggestion, strangely enough, was vetoed by several of those present, who apparently considered the suggestion insulting. Valiantine was therefore entirely justified in refusing such a one-sided control.

On the first occasion on which Dr. Quade sat, just prior to the sitting, he produced a tin of luminous paint

<sup>1</sup> Later in my report I will give my verbatim description of the conditions and sitters.

and a brush. Valiantine's trumpet had already been painted with luminous paint towards the bottom and wider part. Dr. Quade suggested to Valiantine that he should be allowed to paint the narrow end. Valiantine raised no objection to this, and it was done. The procedure, however, of altering conditions at the last moment certainly irritated me, the more especially as Dr. Quade had been very distinctly informed that the séances should take place in the same manner as they had hitherto been held, and that I did not base my research work on anything but the possible value of any *communications* which might be obtained.

The third sitting was held on Thursday. On this occasion I did not sit, but Mrs. Bradley sat with Valiantine in my place. It was some time before any phenomena took place, and the entire results were even poorer than on the two previous evenings.

After this third comparatively negative sitting I became convinced that there was something wrong with the general conditions, and I determined to find out the cause.

My wife's sister is married to a German, Mr. Hans Gunther, and they live in Saxony. On the Friday—May 3—they were travelling through Berlin and spending the night there at the Excelsior Hotel. Frau von Dirksen, on being told of this, very kindly invited them to her house to dinner. I was obliged to refuse this invitation on their behalf, as they had previously invited my wife, Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine, and myself to dine with them. I refused Frau von Dirksen's invitation very deliberately because of the purpose I had in view, and I informed her very explicitly of this purpose afterwards.

After dinner, in the rooms of Mr. and Mrs. Gunther at the Excelsior Hotel, the six of us sat: Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine, Mr. and Mrs. Gunther, my wife and myself. We had no music, no gramophone, nor trumpet. Within less than one minute spirit voices came through and continued conversing with us, practically without a pause, for one hour and twenty-five minutes. It was one of the most brilliantly fluent "voice" séances I have ever experienced. All the voices spoke clearly and distinctly—both in German and English. In addition to the Guides, my father, my sister Annie, Warren Clarke, Mr. Austin Harrison (the famous writer and founder of *The English Review*), and other personal

spirits spoke with us at length. My wife's father and relatives spoke with her and also with her sister, Mrs. Gunther. Mr. Gunther's father spoke with him in German, and several other personal spirits spoke with us during the evening. I had a long conversation with Dr. Barnett and asked him the reason that we were getting such negative results at Frau von Dirksen's. He told me that there was such a lack of harmony in the conditions there that it was only with the utmost difficulty that any manifestations could be given. He told me that not only was there an impenetrable barrier of suspicion and doubt shown by the various sitters, but that during the séances they were disobeying the instructions given, and that some of them were groping about for the trumpet when it was lifted in the air, and that they waved their arms in trying to feel behind it. This destroyed the ectoplasmic forces, and made it practically impossible for the spirits to materialize their voices. Dr. Barnett added that unless this attitude was changed, and the proper conditions were rigidly maintained, it would be useless to continue holding sittings there.

Realizing the futility of continuing a series of séances under such deplorable conditions, on the following morning, Saturday, May 4, I wrote Frau von Dirksen a very firm and explicit letter. I told her what had taken place at the sitting at the Hôtel Excelsior, and in my letter I said that even though she had expressed her satisfaction at the sittings held at her house I considered them three of the worst, in poverty of phenomena, that I had ever experienced under Valantine's mediumship, and that the cause was the entire lack of discipline on the part of the sitters.

I reminded Frau von Dirksen of the brilliant records and irrefutable evidence which had been obtained under Valantine's mediumship, not only in America, but in England and many other countries—attested to and recorded by some hundreds of witnesses. I informed her that I considered it waste of time to continue, and that we should prefer the sittings to end at once, and that we should leave Berlin on the following day. I stated that the sitting she had arranged for the Saturday evening, to which certain members of her family had been invited, could take place as a final one, providing the sitters observed the necessary conditions.

It should be clearly understood that neither Frau von Dirksen nor any of the sitters had expressed dissatisfac-

tion with, or adverse criticism of the previous sittings. Since none of them had ever before experienced "direct voice" phenomena, they were, of course, incapable of judging relatively. It must be emphasized that it was *I and Mrs. Bradley* who stated that, in accordance with our lengthy experience and wide knowledge, these sittings were comparatively negative and poverty-stricken in phenomena.

On Friday, the day prior to my addressing this letter to Frau von Dirksen, she had approached me in regard to the financial arrangements with Valiantine. I told her that the arrangement made by Dr. Quade was that Valiantine's return fare (from London to Berlin), which amounted to £20, should be paid, and a sum of £100 contributed towards the expenses of his travelling from New York. Frau von Dirksen then saw Valiantine and handed him three thousand marks (nearly £150). I consider it imperative to mention these figures because the implication has since been made that the money side has always represented a chief motive. It was certainly not so in this case. Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine's return fares from Williamsport (Pennsylvania) to London amount to £250, and, with the ensuing expenses of their stay in Europe, would bring the minimum cost (without recompense for Valiantine's time) to at least £450. It will, therefore, at once be seen that the contribution made by Frau von Dirksen was only equitable. In addition to this, I should like to say that I personally defrayed all the costs for the special trip to Berlin. The return fares for four people, and the travelling expenses, amount to £90, and the additional expenditure during our stay there amounted to about £80.

On Saturday, May 4, Valiantine returned Frau von Dirksen her contribution, and I will refer to this particular point when dealing with Dr. Kröner's report.

A sitting was held after dinner on that night, and the sitters on this occasion were chiefly members of the von Dirksen family. It was perhaps a trifle better than the previous sittings—there was slightly less chatter amongst the sitters and less movement, but it could not be described as anything but comparatively poor.<sup>1</sup>

On the Monday morning I left Berlin for London, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine with Mrs. Bradley.

<sup>1</sup> On the day following—Sunday, May 5—a sitting was held to which I refer later in this report,

Frau von Dirksen, it is only fair to say, had been quite charming to me during my entire stay. She accompanied me to the station to see me off on the train, saying how much she was looking forward to a visit to England and to seeing me again.

In all, after I had left Berlin, four more sittings were held: on the Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday—May 7, 9, 11 and 12. According to Mrs. Bradley's notes, they were all comparatively negative, and the fourth one was a complete blank.

My wife and Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine left Berlin on the early morning of May 13, and my wife informs me that Frau von Dirksen was most charming and affectionate in her manner towards them when they were making their departure, and Frau von Dirksen, her family and her friends were certainly extremely courteous to me during the whole of the time I was staying with them.

Throughout the whole of the time I must emphasize that, with the exception of Frau von Dirksen's remark to me on Sunday, May 5, when she asked me whether I was sure it was not Valiantine who touched the sitters, not one word was said either to me, to my wife, or to Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine, conveying any suggestion whatever that Valiantine was not genuine, and not one word of implication was made that any action whatever on his part could be interpreted as being fraudulent. Had such a suggestion been made it would have been handled immediately, and the proofs would have been demanded.

I have said that this series of sittings was comparatively negative in evidential results. Imagine my amazement, however, when I received a letter, written by Dr. Gerde Walther, of Munich (who was private secretary to the late Baron Schrenck-Notzing)—eleven days after Mrs. Bradley and Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine had left Berlin, saying that Frau von Dirksen had written her. I quote from Dr. Walther's letter verbatim:

"She suddenly wrote to me a strange letter in what seemed to be a rather agitated manner. Valiantine had been *exposed in Berlin*, and therefore, nobody would care to read about a fraudulent medium."

Dr. Walther was apparently not inclined to accept Frau von Dirksen's statement, and wrote to her to that

effect. Dr. Walther, in her letter to me, added that she had asked Dr. Sünder (editor of the *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*) for particulars of the exposure, but that he replied, saying he "did not think it was an exposure at all, at least not an exposure *in flagrante*, which was the only one that really counted in his opinion." He added that it was Dr. Kröner and his wife who *thought* it was fraud.

Dr. Walther added in her letter to me, "I am sorry I was not present, perhaps I could have said something against the 'exposure' then . . . I know how people 'expose' mediums; I am quite sick of all the rubbish they say against Rudi Schneider."

I replied to Dr. Walther as follows:

"DEAR DR. WALTHER,

"If Excellenz von Dirksen wrote to you and said: 'Valiantine has been exposed in Berlin,' she has written an absolute falsehood. During the whole of the time that Valiantine was in Berlin, and until after he had left, there was no allegation of fraud made against him. Mr. Valiantine, his wife and Mrs. Bradley left Berlin on May 13. The first intimation of any allegations against Valiantine was when I received your letter of May 24. My opinion is that Frau von Dirksen is an emotional woman. I am informed that the daughters and all the family are very much against psychical research, and, unquestionably, there has been very considerable animosity brought to bear in this matter.

"I should be indebted if you would let me have Dr. Kröner's address, as I shall write to him immediately."

It was not until June 9, four weeks after leaving Berlin, that any direct statement came from Frau von Dirksen to us. It came in the form of a letter, as follows:

"BERLIN,

MARGARETTENSTR. II.

June 9, 1929.

"DEAR MRS. BRADLEY,

"I am so sorry that I must tell you that we are all here in Berlin convinced that Mr. Valiantine was not quite open in his sittings. I should not have mentioned it, if the gentlemen of the Okkult Society would have

been contented with my silence. Dr. Kröner will write to your husband and so I am obliged to tell you, that there is no possibility of my believing in Mr. Valiantine's honesty. The private sitting he gave me was so absolutely unreal. I saw all his actions and his movements, his sound instrument, and only in the belief that *something* really would happen, I kept quiet. In this private sitting Valiantine made his false actions so clearly that he must have believed me to be very dense. I am awfully sorry not to be able to say different, but of the article from Dr. Kröner you will see what has happened.

"Yours sincerely,

"(Signed) VICTORIA V. DIRKSEN."

Mrs. Bradley then replied to her as follows:

"June 12, 1929.

"DEAR FRAU VON DIRKSEN,

"The statements contained in your letter of June 9 are not only untrue, they are in contradiction to the statements which you made to me when I was your guest in Berlin. Your letter is vague and inexplicit. I entirely fail to understand exactly what you mean when you say: 'Mr. Valiantine was not quite open in his sittings.' This term is quite meaningless. The fact that you may have failed to receive evidential communications is no reflection upon the genuineness of Mr. Valiantine's mediumship. If you possessed any experience whatever of psychic phenomena you would understand that it is impossible for any medium to guarantee satisfactory results.

"You will remember that after the first three sittings, my husband, when he was in Berlin, wrote to you and told you that he considered the conditions so unsatisfactory and the behaviour of the sitters so disturbing, that it was a waste of time to continue the series. You will remember also that Mr. Valiantine returned the sum which you contributed towards his very expensive passage from America. It was only because you pleaded so hard with him that he permitted them to continue. . . .

"In regard to the private sitting Mr. Valiantine gave you, of course you could see all his actions and his movements<sup>1</sup>—that is the object of such a sitting, but to suggest that he would be so stupid as to behave fraudulently

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Bradley was here referring to the "daylight" sittings which Valiantine had given Frau von Dirksen.

in your full sight is not only absurd, but utterly illogical.

"There is one question which you and any others who may have sat with Mr. Valiantine in your houses in Berlin *must answer*: Why did you not accuse Valiantine of fraud at the time?

"That is the first and immediate principle of all psychic researchers. To make an accusation some weeks afterwards entirely disqualifies your allegations.

"My husband desires me to inform you that he will be glad to receive Dr. Kröner's letter as soon as possible, and also any communications which may be directed to him from any other members of the Okkult Society. He will then deal with the whole matter.

"You must remember that six years of intensive psychic research work can in no way be affected by these few negative sittings, under deplorable conditions. A vast accumulation of irrefutable evidence has been collected not only in England, but in America, Italy, Brazil, and many other countries, under Mr. Valiantine's mediumship.

"The sittings held at your house in Berlin were negative. You and your sitters are at liberty to form any individual opinion you may wish, but under no circumstances must you make any accusation of fraud against Mr. Valiantine unless you are prepared to prove, with witnesses, that he was deliberately *caught in the act of cheating*. This you cannot now do, since you omitted to make such an accusation at the time, either to me or to my husband, and any allegations that you may subsequently make will be very adequately dealt with.

"Yours sincerely,

"(Signed) MABEL E. BRADLEY."

Frau von Dirksen evidently found the logic of this letter beyond her capacity for reply. So, apparently, she sought the assistance of Dr. Kröner.

Mr. Florizel von Reuter, who originally approached me on behalf of the Berlin Okkult Society to arrange for Valiantine's visit to Berlin, happened to be in London during the early part of June, when he was giving recitals there. During his short stay, Mr. von Reuter and his mother dined with me at Dorincourt, and I told him everything that had taken place in Berlin. Mr. von Reuter and his mother both possess a knowledge of

psychical research. I asked him if it would be possible for him to see Dr. Quade and Dr. Kröner, and ascertain any particulars he could of the basis upon which the allegations against Valiantine were founded. Mr. von Reuter got into touch with Dr. Quade in Berlin and received the following letter from him:

*Translation of a letter of Dr. F. Quade received by  
Florizel von Reuter*

DEAR MR. VON REUTER,

Touching the Bradley-Valiantine affair you have only heard one side, and are consequently a little too harsh in your judgment of us. Mr. and Mrs. Bradley and the Valiantines were treated most hospitably and amiably. At the first sitting only the nearest relatives of Frau v. Dirksen were present, she having a right to stipulate this, *as she was giving the 3,000 marks.* I had only slight influence upon the sittings, as I could only choose three sitters. At the second sitting Dr. and Mrs. Kröner, as well as Dr. and Mrs. Schwab, were present, all decidedly *pro*; the third sitting my wife and I, the clairvoyante Countess Beck; another time Dr. Sünner; at one of the last ones, Colonel Schuppe and wife and myself. None of these people were sceptics or novices, so they could not have had a bad effect. The fact that none of these got anything convincing cannot be attributed to their personal attitude. Frau von Dirksen, in spite of her growing suspicions, preserved her amiable attitude and prevented any lack of discipline on the part of the sitters.

Mr. Bradley himself admits that the first three sittings were the worst he ever experienced with Valiantine, but it is not right to hold Frau v. D., or those persons invited by me, responsible. When one considers that there was never a single movement of the trumpet which Valiantine could not have made himself in the complete darkness, that we never heard him speaking simultaneously with another voice, that nothing was said that Valiantine could not just as well have said himself, that the German spoken sounded exactly like the stammering, halting speech of a foreigner, and that the voices themselves seemed disguised, Mr. Bradley must admit that he himself would never have been convinced by such "phenomena," nor can he expect Frau v. Dirksen to be impressed. We, who are experts in psychic phenomena and have gained conviction elsewhere, have been forced

to the conclusion that everything which took place could easily have been produced fraudulently.

Certain observations of Frau v. Dirksen, her daughter and the Kröners would seem to indicate that there was, indeed, occasional trickery, and Dr. Kröner's account of the sittings will deal with these, although I have used my influence to induce Dr. Kröner *not to draw the conclusion* that, because the Berlin result was unfavourable, Valiantine is not a genuine medium or that Mr. Bradley's impressions, as told in his books, were the result of insufficient attention and care.

I hope you will do your best to persuade Mr. Bradley that there is no ill-feeling or deliberate intention to be unjust in our conclusions.

I feel sure that if you had been present you would have been of the same opinion.

I hope you will do all in your power to decrease the tension and avoid anything in the way of a scandal, etc., etc.

(Signed) DR. F. QUADE.

Mr. von Reuter added in a postscript:

"I see that I omitted to translate a paragraph where Dr. Quade regrets that scientific control conditions, such as those in Genoa, were not permitted in Berlin. He also says: 'I think that those spirits who, several years ago, prophesied a revenge-war—on the part of Germany—did not feel at home in this atmosphere and that they consequently left Valiantine in the lurch.' "

*Translation of F. v. Reuter's reply to Dr. F. Quade*

DEAR DR. QUADE,

Thank you for your detailed letter. Of course, I never thought that those sitters introduced into the circle by you would have a bad effect. You yourself admit, however, through your remarks, that the *pros* were greatly in the minority, being confined to four, whereas in our original discussions it was emphasized that, owing to the extreme sensitiveness of the Valiantine mediumship, the *pros* should be in the majority and novices limited to a couple. I consider the chances were consequently very poor from the beginning. As regards the control, I also made it quite clear that one must take things as one found them in order to prevent any dis-harmony in the circle at first.

You mention the Genoa control. Of course, that was very fine, but the condition there was that every sitter should be controlled. Valiantine told me, personally, that he was ready to be controlled, only stipulating that everyone present should control each other, a very justifiable precaution against unfair tricks of sceptics. This suggestion was, I am told, vetoed by several who considered it insulting, so there was no question of scientific control-conditions and Valiantine was quite justified in refusing such a one-sided control. Dr. Barnett is said to have complained bitterly at a private sitting with Bradley in a Berlin hotel about the lack of discipline. Mr. Bradley himself corroborates this complaint through his statement that upon one occasion a sitter who was getting tired simply got up and walked out of the room, thereby paralysing the phenomena.

I do not attach much importance to the statements of Frau v. Dirksen. Mr. Bradley told me that she was even delighted with the very poor result of the first sitting, but she has allowed her opposing relatives to persuade her, and once you are suspicious every movement may be misconstrued. More grave are the observations of Dr. Kröner, as well as the broken German, which must have produced a bad impression, although one should take into consideration that the voice production is so intimately related to the organization of the medium that unfavourable conditions might affect the character of the speech. It is to be hoped that Dr. Kröner will consider all these points in his record. I also am of the opinion that occasional faking on the part of the medium cannot influence the question of the genuineness of the medium, certainly not in the case of Valiantine, whose remarkable achievements are too well known. I will tell you personally something about the wonderful results in Venice when I see you. You want me to use my influence with Mr. Bradley to prevent an open scandal, but you can hardly expect Bradley to keep silence if Kröner is going to make a public statement. Please tell Kröner to be sure and acquaint Bradley with the contents of his report and to let him know when and where it is to appear, as none can deny Bradley the right of reply. He intends to publish his version in England, which, while it may increase the tension, is certainly justified.

Naturally, I cannot judge the case and am quite impartial in my attitude, though I will not disguise my opinion that conditions at the v. Dirksens' were anything

else but ideal and that they were principally to blame for the miserable results, etc., etc.

(Signed) FLORIZEL VON REUTER.

Mr. von Reuter's reply is a very lucid and able one, but it should also be noted that Dr. Quade has no justification for any accusation against Valiantine. He says: "There was never a single movement of the trumpet which Valiantine *could not* have made himself," and also that "nothing was said that Valiantine *could not* just as well have said himself." And also asserts: "Everything that took place *could have been* produced fraudulently."

This, of course, is a positively ridiculous basis for an allegation—all it amounts to is mere assumption. I am also amused by Dr. Quade's naïve reference to the sitters as "*we who are experts in psychic phenomena.*" This, of course, is absurd, since not one of the sitters had ever before sat at a "direct voice" séance.

An assertion of what "*could have been*" can never be accepted as *evidence in proof* of fraud.

It was not until June 19—five weeks after leaving Berlin—that the following letter, which I publish verbatim, was received:

*Translation of letter from Dr. W. Kröner to  
H. Dennis Bradley*

CHARLOTTENBURG,  
June 19, 1929.

DEAR MR. BRADLEY,

Mrs. von Dirksen has handed on to me your wife's letter for further attention. In this she writes that you are waiting for my report and that of the other members in order to publish the complete material in England.

I am already in touch with the British Society for Psychical Research and several other people regarding the publication of the whole of the material, which comprises ninety pages, and which contains all separate reports, and I must naturally reserve all rights of authorship. From the very beginning it was not my intention to supply this matter to the Daily Press, hoping that you also would leave them out of the matter. But, of course, I am prepared to follow you into this camp.

Unfortunately, from the somewhat temperamental remarks made by your wife, I realize that it will be very

difficult to conduct the coming controversy as regards the genuineness of the mediumship of Mr. Valantine with that scientific seriousness, the reality of putting aside all personal and worldly actuality which is naturally desired in the interests of the universally-followed object of discovery despite all contradictory methods. Please remember that here it is not a question of a fight, that I am not an opponent of the occult territory, but that I am one of the keenest explorers thereof, and that I am an unprejudiced friend of spiritualism.

Should I come along with so serious an accusation against one of the best mediums, then this is done with a heavy heart and fully realizing the responsibility towards the proof and justification and the belief of a hundred million confirmed spiritualists. It is also done with the knowledge of the duty of having to put a finger in an open wound, especially because the damage comes to light in one's own camp. If one attempted to shade anything it would give opponents the chance of scoring a point.

Were I not so *absolutely* certain of my facts, had I based my opinion on suppositions, then I would remain silent. I can, however, prove with the attested statements of five witnesses and seventeen separate, partly direct, fraudulent observations, partly actual fraudulent proofs: further with a large number of indirect proofs that in the case of Mr. Valantine's Berlin productions, it was not a question of an occasional accidental fraudulent trance, but it was a question of a systematic, and in all probability a quite exceptional swindle.

Whether formerly Mr. Valantine was a genuine medium—this question I, purposely, leave open, although I consider him highly disqualified on account of his own behaviour, and on account of your disclaimer to any physical control, and I am of the opinion that he must bring new proofs of his competence as a medium under other conditions. Why I consider the Genoese séances nothing less than strong in demonstration you will be able to see from my remarks relating thereto. This question of "*also genuine*" is the point which the discussion between us will have to settle, and I leave the first step to you. Unfortunately, the remarks passed here are not to be shaken, and the best would be if you satisfied yourself regarding them.

If we did not come forward earlier with our claim, especially if we did not inform you or your wife

immediately regarding this, then this occurred because we wished to be absolutely certain of our facts, and we did not wish to give any grounds for comment; further, because the material—which consists of many separate remarks or observations—had first to be collected and sorted scientifically, whereby great care had to be taken that no word too much or too little was mentioned.

This very extensive work has taken me nearly a month to do, added to which I am very fully occupied in business. Had it been at all possible to give you immediate news of any suspected observations, then an immediate cessation of the séances would have been the result of your discontinuance. That is also the reason why, contrary to your own intentions, we wished the séances to continue. We wanted certainty, not doubt. Furthermore, there existed always the hope of the development of actual phenomena.

If there exists here in Berlin an atmosphere of mistrust then that is not to be traced back to ignorance or opposition. It must also be remembered that this atmosphere did not exist from the commencement. We, all of us, had the greatest trust. First your and then Mr. Valantine's un-understandable and brusque refusal of all, even the slightest claims to control, have disturbed this original harmony; not, however, the phenomena, which is weak in itself, because we know as well as you that the spiritual principle cannot be governed. But we cannot quietly allow that, in the absence of a genuine phenomenon, anything of a fraudulent nature is put before us. And if you require that from the beginning we dispense with our senses of sight, hearing and tasting for the control, then you must not be surprised if we turn to self-help in order to avoid contact, which, after all, has not hurt the medium from a health point of view, which you have always suggested. From that you can see how carefully and tactfully we have behaved; you may perhaps be able to demand blind faith in your authority from evident spiritualists, but not from psychical explorers. As long as the voices themselves showed no proof whatever of identity it would have been fair, at least, to have made the control of the genuineness of the voice phenomena as physical apparitions possible, but not to state the undisputed choice of a person under test.

The original of my material is with Mr. Th. Besterman, librarian of the Society of Psychical Research,

Tavistock Square, London, W.C., where for the moment it is being translated into English. I have given instructions to them to let you see the original or to place at your disposal a copy of the translation.

Trusting that in spite of all we are on sound ground and that we can cross swords in a most knightly manner.

I am, with kind regards, etc.,

(Signed) W. KRÖNER.

In my reply to Dr. Kröner I embodied the views I have set forth in these pages, emphasizing the fact that no criticisms were made during my stay in Berlin, and no charges brought, which might have been instantly sifted, analysed and proved or refuted.

What does Dr. Kröner's letter amount to? It will be observed that he failed entirely to specify in any detail whatsoever the allegations of fraud on the part of Valiantine, and again I must emphasize the fact that he omitted to offer one word of criticism either to me, to my wife, or to Valiantine, during the whole of the time we stayed in Berlin. If he had charges to make it was obviously his duty to have made them at the time, and certainly obviously his duty to have stated what those charges were when he wrote to me. There is a weak and evasive note throughout his letter. He merely states that he has sent ninety pages of material to the Society for Psychical Research, and that he must reserve all rights of authorship. I fail to understand the somewhat involved third paragraph of his letter, in which he refers to the "somewhat temperamental remarks" made by my wife. Mrs. Bradley's letter to Frau von Dirksen was clear and logical. It refuted the absolutely vague and meaningless letter she had received from Frau von Dirksen, and it demanded an explicit reply as to what actually the allegations against Valiantine consisted of. Frau von Dirksen was unable to reply, and so, apparently, was Dr. Kröner.

It is quite impossible for me to decipher what Dr. Kröner means when he refers to "that scientific seriousness, and the reality of putting aside all personal and worldly actuality." On the part of the sitters in Berlin, there was no semblance of scientific seriousness whatever. All that was exhibited was the antithesis of seriousness. The sittings were held after large dinner-parties, with loose chatter and no note of harmony, and an entire lack of discipline in the séance room. They

were also held in an atmosphere not only of suspicion, but in many instances of direct antagonism.

One paragraph of his letter Dr. Kröner failed to justify or explain. He stated he was absolutely certain of his facts, and could "prove with the attested statements of five witnesses and seventeen separate, *partly* direct fraudulent observations, *partly* actual fraudulent proofs: further with a large number of *indirect* proofs that in the case of Mr. Valantine's Berlin productions, it was not a question of an occasional accidental fraudulent trance, but it was a question of a systematic, and in all probability, a quite exceptional swindle."

After making such a statement, which I deliberately and unequivocally assert to be false, Dr. Kröner omitted to quote even one specific instance. Why did he not do so? Was he so anxious to reserve his rights of authorship in those ninety pages? Was there some obscure or material reason for this coyness? Was he frightened of me, or was he so timid of the basis of his allegations that he dared not do so? His excuse for not making any allegation of fraud while we were in Berlin, and waiting for many weeks afterwards before he wrote a nondescript letter, was mere evasion. This was not an exposure at all, and it entirely disqualified him, and any of the other sitters who may have been present, from any scientific credence being played on any assumptions they may have afterwards evolved in secret conclave.

To make vague innuendoes, classified by such terms as "*partly* direct observations," "*partly* actual proofs," and "*indirect* proofs," is not merely unscientific, but utterly feeble in argument.

If phenomena occur which appear inexplicable and beyond the comprehension of sceptical sitters, such sitters are invariably inclined to *imagine* they must have been produced by the medium, and to *invent suppositions* as to how they *could have been* produced by fraud. Such theories, however, can never be accepted as *proof* of facts, and are certainly the direct antithesis of the term "*exposure*."

Dr. Kröner's contention of Valantine's refusal of control having disturbed the harmony is absurd. He quite understood that Valantine would sit at Berlin under the same conditions as he had previously sat with me, and, in addition to this, Valantine *was agreeable to control if all the other sitters were controlled*, but *they refused*.

What Dr. Kröner meant when he said "you must not be surprised if we turn to self-help in order to avoid contact," I fail entirely to fathom, unless by this he meant to imply that some of the *sitters* resorted to trickery. It was extremely fortunate that either I or Mrs. Bradley sat with Valiantine on every occasion in Berlin. She and I have known every phase of Valiantine mediumship for the last six years. We have sat with him literally on hundreds of occasions, and we can both vouch that hitherto there had been *no semblance of attempt at fraud* upon his part during the whole of the time. We both know the "voices" of Valiantine's Guides, as well as we know the voices of any member of our own family. These spirit voices spoke at the Berlin sittings upon many occasions. None of the Berlin sitters knew them because they had not heard them before. If they *thought* these voices were fraudulently produced by Valiantine they are entitled to think so, but under no conditions must they be allowed to assert that they *were* unless they can actually prove this fact.

In regard to Dr. Kröner's ninety page report, which he states he sent to the Society for Psychical Research (London) for publication, it is significant that, in answer to my request to the Society for a copy of the translation, I received a letter from the secretary, Miss I. Newton, dated July 20, 1929, in which she states: "It is the case that Dr. Kröner sent a report to one of the officers of the Society, who has now returned it to Dr. Kröner. I may add that the Society is not printing Dr. Kröner's report."

It is evident from this that Dr. Kröner's report was of such a nature as to be deemed valueless.

I will now deal with and analyse Dr. Kröner's statements and allegations as they appeared in the "*Zeitschrift fur Parapsychologie*" *five months afterwards*, in the winter of 1929.

#### *Dr. Kröner's Report and Affirmations*

Dr. Kröner's reports of the Valiantine sittings in Berlin occupy fifty-one closely printed pages. The title heading, "*Valiantine's Exposure*" by Dr. Walter Kröner, is not only unjustifiable, it is a deliberately false statement. There had been no exposure of Valiantine by Dr. Kröner, or by any of the sitters in Berlin.

Dr. Kröner's report, from a scientific point of view, is valueless. His report could, with great advantage, have been reduced to one tenth of its size. It largely consists of a series of wearisome repetitions, and, as I shall show, it contains many glaring and obvious contradictions, displaying a lack of intelligence and care unparalleled in any writer with pretensions to a knowledge of psychical research.

In my analysis of Dr. Kröner's allegations against Valiantine, the only method possible for me is to take his criticisms page by page.

On the first page Dr. Kröner advertises his knowledge of various (genuine or so-called) physical mediums, and the tricks and swindles alleged to have been practised by them. Dr. Kröner does not, however, state his personal experiences with any of these mediums. He merely exhibits a knowledge common to all who have perused psychic literature. It must be noted, however, that none of the mediums quoted by Dr. Kröner is a "direct voice" medium. The phenomena produced under their mediumship are of an entirely different character to those produced under the mediumship of Valiantine.

In so far as the "direct voice" phenomena are concerned, neither Dr. Kröner nor any of the sitters in Berlin possess any experience whatever of this form of phenomena. Neither he nor they are qualified to judge what does, or should, take place. With my long experience of Valantine's "direct voice" mediumship, and also with the experience of my own "direct voice" mediumship and that of Mrs. Bradley and two or three other well-developed voice mediums in Britain, I am entitled to proclaim a knowledge of the conditions necessary for this form of phenomena. I know its extreme sensitiveness, and from many years of experience I am completely aware that the slightest disturbance, either mental or physical, on the part of any of the sitters, will either destroy or mutilate the delicate vibrations and so render communications in the "direct voice" either impossible or negative.

On page 2 Dr. Kröner states that: "In the house of Frau von Dirksen there reigned the spirit of cultivated hospitality which connected all visitors harmoniously from the first. No negativist or real scepticism was allowed."

I assert that scepticism was rampant in the Berlin

circles from the very first sitting, which I will subsequently prove by the sitters' own statements.

On page 3 Dr. Kröner states: "There was not the slightest doubt about the falseness of the productions, and with wonderful tact and unparalleled self-restraint the medium was allowed to leave unmolested." What an amazingly stupid attitude for an expert investigator!

On page 3 Dr. Kröner refers to "the faultless, proved, well-arranged and worked swindles in a great number of single cases." Not one swindle was proved.

In the same paragraph on the same page Dr. Kröner advances only the theory that "every one of the phenomena which happened in Berlin could be produced by swindle under the conditions." "*Could be*" is not proof. It is mere assumption.

On the same page he goes on to say that the swindle of Valiantine is "so primitive and so clumsy that it is astonishing and almost amazing that he has not been discovered before."

The only amazing thing about this statement is that on the very next page (page 4) Dr. Kröner states: "*At the present moment we are not in a position to prove this accusation.*"

The Berlin sitters were distinctly informed by me before I undertook the long and expensive journey to that country that none of my work had been based upon the physical phenomena which had taken place, but only upon the mental evidence of survival which had been acquired.

Dr. Kröner is evidently obsessed by the primitive bug of physical control. No control can have any possible bearing whatever upon mental evidence. Neither I nor Valiantine agreed to visit Berlin for the exhibition of physical phenomena. I, personally, disregard the physical, for however remarkable the phenomena may appear, they are certainly valueless as proof of survival. Years of research work have been wasted by scientists in an endeavour to prove physical phenomena under conditions of control, and nothing of any value has ever been achieved, neither has there been any scientific agreement arrived at. It is only the mental evidence that is indisputable.

The classification of mental evidence is that the communicating spirits must give irrefutable evidence of their identities and personalities. I am well aware that but little mental evidence was acquired during the series of

sittings in Berlin. Before Dr. Kröner's report appeared, I stated publicly that the sittings held there were negative, but negative sittings do not prove fraud.

My entire work has been devoted to the accumulation of mental evidence, *not* to physical phenomena.

I have written lengthy books which have been entirely devoted to volunteered mental proofs. Physical control of any description can have no bearing whatever upon these evidences. Dr. Kröner's ideas are atavistic, and he is unable, even theoretically, to offer any argument whatever against the innumerable psychic proofs which have been published by me.

On page 4 Dr. Kröner states: "Our proof of the swindling character of Valiantine cannot be denied. . . . It is an extraordinary cynical swindle."

Dr. Kröner fails to bring this proof. Not only is this assertion denied by me, it is denied by a large number of eminent men in Germany, whose knowledge of these sittings has been obtained only by reading Dr. Kröner's own reports, which they have dismissed as contradictory, unscientific, and completely lacking in the proof he so arrogantly assumes.

Dr. Kröner makes another terrible contradiction in terms on page 5, when, immediately after stating that "Valiantine has swindled from A to Z," he says in the very next paragraph: "At the present moment we are *fairly positive* that Valiantine still owes us proof."

Which of these statements is one to accept? Can anyone accept any statement whatever by such an appallingly inconsistent and unscientific investigator?

Dr. Kröner was personally present at only three of the series of sittings held in Berlin. The dates were April 30, May 7 and May 12. Two months before Dr. Kröner's report was published in Germany, I *publicly* recorded the sittings on April 30 and May 7 as *comparatively negative*, and the sitting held on May 12 as a *complete blank*. It is extremely strange that Dr. Kröner elaborates his observations on these three sittings to the extent of thirteen pages. Quoting verbatim from my report, I wrote: "At the second sitting (April 30), also held after a large dinner-party, the phenomena which took place were comparatively negative. The conditions appeared to me to be bad. There was a looseness in the circle and an entire lack of harmony or passivity.

Individual sitters were continuously talking to each other in separate duologues."

On page 6 Dr. Kröner criticizes the method of placing the sitters in the circle. He states that "Valiantine placed the chairs of the eight sitters one metre apart." This would represent a circle of twelve metres, with a diameter of just under four metres. Thus, a trumpet placed in the centre would be two metres away from the medium or any of the sitters. I will refer to these measurements later.

Dr. Kröner criticizes Valiantine for placing the men and women sitters alternatively, and implies that this was arranged in order that Valiantine might sit between two women. In this Dr. Kröner at once displays his ignorance of the regular procedure at a "direct voice" séance of alternating the sexes. This is the customary method all over the world.

He criticizes the instructions which I (H.D.B.) personally gave. I instructed the sitters to sit up straight, and not to cross their legs. These conditions are necessary, and are invariably practised at all "voice" sittings. Dr. Kröner states that instructions were given to the sitters *not to stick their feet out*. This is a false statement. I said nothing of the kind. He also states that they were "asked not to concentrate too much or *to distrust*, as it interfered with the vibrations." I made no mention whatever of distrust. I requested them not to concentrate too much because one of the first principles in sitting is passivity, and *not* concentration.

On page 6 Dr. Kröner states: "To touch the medium was strictly forbidden on account of the danger to his life."

This is a deliberate falsehood. No such statement was ever made. I emphasized only the necessary warning in regard to the turning on of a light.

Dr. Kröner says that the sitters were instructed to avoid conversation in regard to other mediums than Valiantine, and that the conversations should be in regard to the Valiantine productions. This is absolutely untrue. No such stupid and meaningless request was made.

He also states: "The louder the gramophone played the better apparently for phenomena." What does Dr. Kröner mean by this cryptic remark? When a "spirit voice" is heard the gramophone is at once stopped.

During the sitting on April 30, the phenomena of flashing sparks appeared. Dr. Kröner states that the "light was similar to a pocket lighter." These sparks did not appear to me at all like a pocket lighter, and they appeared at some very considerable distance away from where Valiantine was sitting—and over the heads of some of the other sitters.

On page 8 Dr. Kröner stated that the "voice" of Dr. Barnett asked for "patience," promised good phenomena, complained about the atmosphere and interruptions, and objected to the manner of sitting. I am not aware whether Dr. Kröner understands English or not, but this is another false statement. Dr. Barnett said nothing whatever of promising good phenomena; neither does he ever, at any sitting, make such statements.

Dr. Kröner describes how the luminous trumpet touched Frau von Dirksen on the head, and how both sides of her face were softly stroked by it, and how a quiet, hoarse, whispering voice was heard speaking through it. This happened on many occasions during the series of sittings held. This, and all other phenomena which took place, were genuine. Dr. Kröner apparently does not realize that as Valiantine's luminous trumpet is only twenty-seven inches long, this would mean that when it was touching Frau von Dirksen's face, if Valiantine were producing phenomena fraudulently he would be in very close proximity to Frau von Dirksen, and would have to be standing actually within about fourteen inches of her knees. Therefore, she could easily discover him standing there by stretching out her feet. As it is proved by their own statements that various of the sitters throughout the whole of the series of sittings were not only stretching out their feet, but were feeling about with their hands, it is of great importance to note that the sitters *absolutely failed to make this very simple discovery.*

At this sitting the "spirit voice" of "Cristo d'Angelo" spoke in Italian. I can assert that Valiantine does not speak Italian. Dr. Kröner states that he had asked the person sitting next to Valiantine to speak to him during the time the "voice" was speaking, and that afterwards a controversy occurred among the German sitters as to whether Valiantine *had* spoken at the same time, or just *after* the "voice" was heard. I can personally testify that at innumerable other sittings Valiantine has spoken at the *same time* as a "voice" has been speaking, and this fact is also attested to by

the appointed representatives at an official sitting of the English Society for Psychical Research.

The Berlin sitters own that they are not sure whether Valiantine spoke simultaneously with the "spirit voice" or immediately after. Does Dr. Kröner realize that for Valiantine to speak immediately after a fraudulently produced "voice" would mean that in many cases he would have to leap sometimes eight to ten feet back to his chair in the flash of a second—an impossible feat for a trained acrobat to perform without being instantly detected?

On page 9 Dr. Kröner states that "after the sitting was closed we had to wait a few minutes until the medium allowed us to switch on a light, because, as he said, harm might be caused otherwise. I was very astonished at this because Valiantine was not for one second under any trance whatever. Valiantine conversed calmly with us the whole of the time."

If Dr. Kröner possesses the slightest experience whatever of the "direct voice" sittings, he would know that it is always customary at the end of a sitting, after the last "voice" has manifested, to wait a minute before turning on a light, to allow the ectoplasmic forces used to subside. Dr. Kröner's astonishment again displays his complete ignorance. Had he read previously the records of Valiantine's mediumship he would have understood that Valiantine does not go into trance at any of these "voice" sittings. Also, at the direct voice sittings held under my own or Mrs. Bradley's mediumship, neither she nor I have ever been in trance. Nor have several other "voice" mediums, whose experiences are recorded in various journals. Dr. Kröner should understand that it is of extreme value that Valiantine can converse with the sitters during the whole of the time. This afforded Dr. Kröner an opportunity of speaking to him at any time when phenomena were occurring. It must be pointed out very emphatically that the sitters in Berlin had the opportunity of checking and proving at any moment during the sitting that Valiantine was remaining stationary in his chair throughout the entire series.

Dr. Kröner states on page 9 that "Frau von Dirksen could not believe Valiantine had left his chair. She personally had watched him and had purposely given him a chair which squeaked easily. She would have heard therefore if he had moved from his chair." This

is a peculiarly illuminating statement. On page 2 Dr. Kröner states that "in the house of Frau von Dirksen . . . no negativist or real scepticism was allowed," and on page 9 he published the fact that at the very commencement of these sittings Frau von Dirksen "purposely gave Valiantine a squeaking chair" in order, obviously, to endeavour to catch him in the act of cheating. If this is not scepticism (either justifiable or not) I shall be glad to know what is. Do Dr. Kröner and Frau von Dirksen consider this action justifies the statement on page 2 that "there reigned the spirit of cultivated hospitality . . . which connected all visitors harmoniously from the first"? Dr. Kröner's ideas of "cultivated hospitality" would seem as quaint as his views on evidence.

Referring to this particular sitting (April 30), Dr. Kröner states: "I could not come to any definite conclusion, and can only say that there were many extraordinary happenings, but that I could explain away most of the phenomena—if not all—in a most natural way." Such a statement is absolutely valueless. Dr. Kröner has the fairness to say that after this sitting I declared it to be negative. I declared it as negative because there was no mental evidence of value volunteered by the "voices." At the same time, genuine physical phenomena *did* take place at this sitting, and various "spirit voices" spoke at the time. Dr. Kröner entirely fails to explain these phenomena except by reckless *assumption* of fraud, without offering one iota of evidence in support of this assumption.

He states that after this sitting he warned Frau von Dirksen of his doubts, and made the suggestion regarding control, and he also exposes the fact that several of the sitters there, some of whose names he mentions, were unquestionably sceptics, the least sceptical of all perhaps being Dr. Schwab, who "could not make up his mind." Therefore, it can easily be seen that so far from conducting a series of experiments with earnest researchers, anxious to obtain direct mental evidence, the composition of the circles in Berlin was chiefly made up of antagonists and negativists.

It was after this sitting that Dr. Kröner spoke to Valiantine upon the question of his being controlled. He says that "Valiantine refused any control whatever. . . . He seemed very insulted, and said that if he were to be controlled every sitter must be controlled

in a similar way. If he were bound, then every sitter must be bound too—also the mouth must be sealed.” Dr. Kröner omits to report that Valiantine’s offer to accept control if all the other sitters were controlled *was refused*, because several of those present apparently considered this suggestion insulting to them. Valiantine was justified in refusing to accept such a one-sided control, and his justification is proved by the fact that the majority of the sitters throughout this series of sittings were breaking conditions by kicking their legs out and feeling about with their arms. I make this statement very deliberately. *There was no semblance of cheating on the part of Valiantine, but Dr. Kröner's own report shows the existence of deplorable indications throughout of cheating on the part of the sitters.*

After presenting all these assumptions of fraud on the part of Valiantine, Dr. Kröner naïvely states: “I endeavoured to make it clear to him that we did not have the slightest doubt as to his genuineness. . . . After this we parted, and I very kindly patted Mr. Valiantine on the shoulder.” On the same page, in the next few lines, Dr. Kröner says: “The fact is that I had made myself very unpleasant to the English guests.” I entirely fail to reconcile these two contradictory statements.

Dr. Kröner then states: “I know that Schrenck-Notzing, instinctively felt sceptical of ‘voice phenomena.’” What on earth has this to do with the present report? Schrenck-Notzing knew nothing whatever of “voice phenomena” and has had no experience whatever of this form of mediumship. Therefore, his personal feelings upon the subject have no possible bearing. I may mention that I (H.D.B.) personally knew Schrenck-Notzing, and have sat with him in Munich. His particular line of psychical research was always entirely different in form to mine. We each represented an entirely different branch of study.

Dr. Kröner records that, after the sitting on April 30 ended, and “the English sitters had gone to bed,” he went back into the séance room with some of the other sitters, including members of Frau von Dirksen’s family, and his (Dr. Kröner’s) wife. He darkened the room, and endeavoured to give an imitation of how Valiantine’s phenomena could be produced by fraudulent means. His description of this rehearsal is peculiarly stupid. Any schoolboy could give a bad imitation of the comparatively negative sitting which had taken place, but neither a

schoolboy nor Dr. Kröner could possibly sit for one and a half hours in a circle of prejudiced sceptics, each waiting to catch him, without being discovered in the first few minutes. Referring to his childish rehearsals, while posing as a swindling medium, Dr. Kröner states that "those sitting next to me could hear the movement by the rustling of my clothes, possibly also by the creaking of the floor—but those sitting farther away were unable to notice any movement." Why then during the whole of the fortnight that ensued did none of them observe the rustling of Valiantine's clothes if he were fraudulent, and the creaking of the floor? Why did those who sat next to him, during the whole of the ensuing fortnight, omit to make the simple action of *placing their hands upon his empty chair, thus definitely establishing fraud*, and ending a ridiculous farce? That they attempted to do this upon many occasions I know, but never did they succeed in finding Valiantine anywhere but in his correct and proper place. Sceptical as they were, they must have received many amazing impressions which they are still finding it difficult to explain, even to themselves. Dr. Kröner states that the imitation of "voices" through the trumpet could be done very easily. He then adds, regarding the Valiantine phenomena, "nevertheless I have never heard such 'voices' in a human being." Another absurd contradiction.

Dr. Kröner refers to my books. He says: "I fought against the idea of swindle because again and again before my eyes appeared the wonderful records of Mr. Bradley, in which the medium converses with absolutely remarkable intelligence for hours, and also with new sitters and in foreign languages on the most intimate subjects. They tell me that this happened and I have been told that at Dorincourt seven intelligences have been speaking at the same time." Dr. Kröner does not read English and has, I understand, only read one of my books: "Den Sternen Entgegen." He has not read the second volume, "The Wisdom of the Gods," which represents a considerable advance in the study of psychical research. If he has any pretension to be a student he should make the endeavour to quote me correctly. Let me tell him that the *medium does not* converse with remarkable intelligence for hours. It is the "*spirit voices*," absolutely apart from and independent of the medium, which converse. As I have stated

in my published records, during the Valiantine sittings "voices" have been heard speaking in French, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, idiomatic Welsh, Portuguese, Basque, Arabic, Sanskrit and Hindustani. I have also heard during the course of conversation the language suddenly change from Danish to Russian, or from Italian to French, the replies from the "spirit voices" coming through with unhesitating fluency. Even in quoting me Dr. Kröner makes a careless exaggeration when he says that at "Dorincourt seven intelligences have been speaking at the same time." This is *not* so. But on several occasions I and several other witnesses have heard *three* distinct "spirit voices" speaking simultaneously.

Although Dr. Kröner discovered no semblance whatever of fraudulent behaviour on the part of Valiantine, yet he states that he warned Dr. Quade and Grafen B. of his mistrust. By this he shows that from the very first he endeavoured to prejudice other sitters. He states that Grafen B. attended a sitting held on May 2 and that "she *considered* the sitting she witnessed with Dr. Quade to be an arranged swindle. She felt *almost sure* that Valiantine understood German, and he appeared always to listen to anything said concerning him. He had been very pessimistic about her after he had heard she was mediumistic herself. She *sensed* he had a bad conscience, but she remained absolutely loyal." What sort of nonsense is this to advance as evidence of fraud? Grafen B. . . . *considered* . . . she felt *almost sure* . . . she *sensed* . . . and Dr. Kröner has the presumption to tabulate this as proof.

Dr. Kröner states that Dr. Quade "could not realize that such a clumsy swindle had occurred. Also, several of the phenomena appeared to him to be inexplicable, so he felt inclined to believe that the phenomena were genuine—or at least, some of them." Dr. Quade's attitude was reserved and correct. Naturally he could not realize a swindle which had *not* taken place.

Dr. Kröner refers to the letter which I wrote to Frau von Dirksen after the third sitting. This letter is printed in full in Dr. Kröner's report. He states "that this letter is so astonishing because until then all sitters remained loyal to the conditions, except the unexpected action of the Baroness P. against the unofficial second trumpet. This phenomenon was the reason for the letter and the supposed spirit protest." This is the first

reference Dr. Kröner makes to an "unofficial trumpet." *No such trumpet existed.* This is pure invention on the part of Dr. Kröner, and the absurd assumption is based upon no evidence whatever. I will deal fully with this point later, when analysing the reports of the sitters in question.

He refers to Frau von Dirksen, saying that she accidentally caught hold of the medium's hand. He is evidently timid of the authenticity of this allegation, as he only refers to it in two lines. I will deal with this when I am dealing with Frau von Dirksen's own report.

Dr. Kröner records his own personal observations during the sitting which he attended on May 7. Although this was only his second sitting, so far from making any attempt whatever to observe the conditions specifically given in order to obtain successful communication with the "spirit voices," Dr. Kröner deliberately ignored all conditions and sat there with the avowed intention of discovering fraud. To quote verbatim, from his own report, he says: "*I had expected to be placed rather awkwardly and therefore had arranged with my wife that she should try occasionally to INVESTIGATE BY FEELING ABOUT.*"

This confession on his part is of significant importance. Dr. Kröner instructed his wife (who was sitting next to Valiantine) to investigate by "*feeling about,*" and he himself, seated in another part of the circle, without a shadow of doubt also occupied himself throughout this sitting by "*feeling about*" in his efforts to discover the medium.

#### *What did Dr. Kröner discover?*

With all his opportunities for feeling about anywhere he failed to discover anything. By his own records Dr. Kröner proves either that he is a peculiarly stupid and inefficient investigator or—which is true—that the Valiantine phenomena were then absolutely genuine.

He records at this sitting that he was touched five times. He says that he himself noticed the first touch, which seemed to be done with warm living fingers, touching the back of his hand, the last four occurring with some instrument against his left knee, or the calf of his leg. Why did he not discover from whom these touches came? If they were not supernormal it would have been a perfectly simple matter, since the whole of the time he was "*feeling about.*" He states that all the

other sitters were touched fairly frequently, on the face, knee, etc. If these touches were fraudulent and were made by Valiantine standing up and walking round the room, nothing could have been easier than for the sitters who, on their own confessions, were also "feeling about," to have discovered him. Dr. Kröner records that during the sitting "voices were heard of 'Dr. Barnett,' 'Kokum,' and 'Bert Everett.' 'Kokum's' voice was heard above the head of Student Doring, *frightening several of the sitters considerably.*" He also records what he calls the "alleged voice of Frau von Dirksen's husband" and a "whispering voice to Student Doring." He states that "All voices spoke in very short sentences," and "it was surprising that none of the 'voices' came out of the trumpet, while at the sittings I (Dr. Kröner) had been present at previously they had talked through the trumpet for a fairly long time." The records of the Valiantine sittings show that while Dr. Barnett uses the trumpet stationary in the centre of the circle, the Guides, Kokum and Bert Everett, both speak *independently*, without the use of the trumpet.

Dr. Kröner states: "I was certain that there must be a second trumpet in the room, because the daughter of the house had knocked against it in the previous sitting." If there was a second trumpet in the room why was it not discovered? It is utterly useless and unscientific for Dr. Kröner to invent an excuse when he cannot explain certain phenomena. He says that he was "certain a second instrument was used," and yet fails to bring forward the slightest proof, which could have been so easily acquired. How was he certain? Where is the proof? Kröner mentions the phenomenon of the trumpet being whirled round the room quickly and carried upwards "as if thrown up to the ceiling, from where it crashed suddenly." This is a peculiarly stupid description of phenomena which have occurred not only at the Valiantine sittings, but also at sittings under my own and my wife's mediumship. During my own personal sittings I have had the trumpet carried to the ceiling, sometimes falling with a crash, and at times wafting gently down. It depends entirely upon the extent of the power available. Dr. Kröner has had no experience whatever of such phenomena and he is entirely unqualified to judge its value. And it is typical of his methods of investigation that when at a loss for an explanation, he solemnly invents a "second trumpet."

Dr. Kröner makes the following statement: "Mr. Bradley, in connection with his letter to Frau von Dirksen, had dared to notify the American Embassy that an American citizen was in danger because grave damage could be done to the health of the medium if anyone turned on a light suddenly, which we were expected to do." Even in making this statement either Dr. Kröner or Frau von Dirksen is carelessly incorrect in facts. I made no mention of the American Embassy to Frau von Dirksen. I stated that the English Embassy in Berlin would be informed, and I most certainly regarded the warning given to Frau von Dirksen as an imperative one. From what subsequently transpired, and the manner in which the sitters were behaving throughout the series, this danger was a very real one. It is a scientifically established fact that in "physical" and "direct voice" séances ectoplasm comes from the medium's body, and is used by the spirit entities as an instrument for manifestations. The effect of a light suddenly being switched on has the effect of cramming this ectoplasm back into the body with a terrific shock. In one of my books ("Den Sternen Entgegen") I have described an occurrence which took place in the presence of several witnesses. Because of its importance I will briefly quote the incident, which took place at Dorincourt, on February 23, 1924, at a sitting at which were present my wife and myself, Mr. and Mrs. de Wyckoff, Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer Bryans, and Mr. and Mrs. Caradoc Evans. The servants had previously received instructions to turn off all lights in corridors, but by some mishap a rather powerful electric light appears to have been switched on in the yard of the garage, the building of which is close to and partly facing one of the windows of the room in which the séance was held. The garage light came through the window over the top of the curtains, and in a sufficient quantity for one to see dimly the faces of the sitters. Valiantine was observed in a limp condition, and we saw the trumpet suspended without visible support close to Mrs. Bryans in mid-air. At the moment the light appeared, however, it fell to the ground. Valiantine was observed to be breathing very heavily. We sat on in the dark for about ten minutes, when we heard him murmuring: "Oh, my stomach." As he seemed to be in such distress we decided to turn on the light. De Wyckoff got up from his chair and took two

steps forward to the switch, when the spirit voice of Bert Everett cried from the ceiling: "Don't turn on the light." The "voice" was unmistakably urgent and frantic.

De Wyckoff went to Valiantine's assistance, and said that "Valiantine was enveloped in a whitish sort of film." Mr. Caradoc Evans then crossed over and later described "the substance as a slimy, frothy bladder into which you could dip a finger, but through which you could not pierce." I felt Valiantine's face and hands and they were clammy and cold. De Wyckoff, Bryans, Evans and myself—the ladies had left the room—remained with him in the dark for about half an hour, until he revived sufficiently to be half carried to a couch in my study.

After a time he was put in bed, and the morning following, on account of his continued illness, Dr. H. Cooper of Surbiton was called in. That day he remained in bed. On Tuesday, with the exception of a black bruise on the stomach, measuring about two inches by three—evidently caused by the shock of the returning ectoplasm—he was quite well.

It will be realized that after such an experience the warning given of the possibility of an exposed light being flashed on *inside* the séance room in Berlin was an imperative one.

Dr. Kröner records the cold draughts passing through the sittings—the "so-called magnetic wind. Shortly after that it was blown against my (Dr. Kröner's) forehead, exactly as if someone had blown at me through a pipe. Immediately after this my wife noticed the same occurrence." Again Dr. Kröner displays the ordinary common ignorance of the novice. The psychic draught has often been registered scientifically as a usual occurrence when the ectoplasmic forces are being used. Dr. Kröner has no knowledge upon such matters, and it is typical of his mentality that he at once invents "a pipe." He would have been well advised not to have attempted to write such an amateurish criticism.

Dr. Kröner reports that "the Guide (Dr. Barnett) stated during the sitting that there had been a disturbance and that somebody had stretched out a leg." Immediately after this Dr. Kröner reports that "everybody present denied having done so." Here is a deliberate and glaring self-confessed falsehood, for, on the same page of his report, Dr. Kröner states: "On the

way home my wife told me that it was she who was fishing about with her feet." Therefore, according to her husband, who presumably knows, Frau Kröner deliberately lied at this sitting. Dr. Kröner in connection with this sitting, states: "I noticed that all the sitters were very much impressed and were likely to accept the phenomena as genuine."

It should here be noted that this represents the sum total of Dr. Kröner's own personal observations of the Valiantine mediumship, since the one other sitting which he attended on May 12 was completely blank. It must therefore be stated emphatically that in Dr. Kröner's own record of his observations he has failed to establish one solitary point of proof of any fraud whatever on the part of Valiantine. All that he succeeded in establishing was his own incapacity for scientific and exact observation, to say nothing of consistency of statement.

Dr. Kröner refers to the statement made by his wife on the way home, and to what she alleges to have discovered by acting upon his instructions to her and "feeling about with her feet." She made no mention whatever of this alleged incident to Frau von Dirksen, to the medium, to Mrs. Bradley, or to any of the other sitters present. She was so timid and uncertain of herself that she could only evolve such an allegation in consultation with her husband alone—an attitude of mind which is illuminating. I will deal with Frau Kröner's statement later.

It is amusing that after failing to establish any proof whatever of fraudulent action Dr. Kröner should dare to make the following assertion: "Summing everything up there is no doubt that it is all a swindle. One can quite understand that all Valiantine's phenomena which are not accidentally controlled are produced artificially by the medium. It even was not necessary to expect that part of the phenomena was produced by a travelling companion of the medium, although it was naturally conspicuous that most of the phenomena and seemingly inexplicable touchings — particularly those coming from the back—always occurred next to one of Valiantine's friends." This is surely one of the most involved, contradictory and ill-written sentences ever penned by anyone with pretensions to analytical research. He asserts swindle without advancing proof. He refers to phenomena and seemingly inexplicable touchings, and shelves what he cannot explain by attributing this to a

travelling companion, i.e. Mrs. Bradley, with the vague implication that she may be genuine, or that she also may be swindling. He again contradicts himself entirely when he states that the "inexplicable happenings always occurred next to one of Valiantine's friends." In other parts of his report he has stated that alleged phenomena had occurred in all parts of the circle. As an excuse for himself he states: "It must be that Mrs. Bradley is a physical medium. This makes things more complicated." This was one of the few intelligent comments made by Dr. Kröner.

He states that on the following day he notified his "impressions" to Frau von Dirksen, and says: "Frau von Dirksen was of similar opinion." "*Impressions*" and "*opinions*" are not proofs. He has unconscious humour when he asserts that "that which can be proved is only of value," and immediately follows with "We decided to refrain from any official exposure and allow our guests to leave for home quietly." If he had any proofs whatever, why on earth should Dr. Kröner refrain from what he calls an "official exposure"? Further, it is his absolute duty as a psychical researcher to expose fraud—as has been done by me on several occasions, and by all expert researchers in this subject. Why should he or Frau von Dirksen refrain from exposure and allow the medium to leave for home quietly? The reason they refrained is that they *knew* they had no solid basis whatever for the assumptions evolved from their own minds. Being without proof, they were frightened to make any assertion whatever in the presence of Valiantine, or Mrs. Bradley or myself. They waited until we had left their country, and then, after a considerable lapse of time, launched a weak and cowardly attack.

Dr. Kröner makes a statement which is again a lamentable contradiction. He says: "There has never been a link missing in the chain of direct or indirect proof. A fortunate unveiling would perhaps have been a very good theatrical coup. In case of failure or partial failure the situation would have become worse." How is it possible to reconcile such a ludicrous assertion. If there were not a link missing then the unveiling would surely have been an easy matter. Nothing could have been simpler than for Dr. Kröner to arrange that when the alleged phenomena took place in one part of the room, for the other sitters next to Valiantine in the other part of the room to have discovered him out of his chair.

Dr. Kröner's report of the last sitting which he attended—the sitting which was completely blank, and devoid of any phenomena whatever—would be amusing were it not so entirely foolish. In the first place he is so careless in his records that he states that this sitting took place on May 13, whereas the actual date was Sunday, May 12. He states that "by the special request of the medium, an English diplomat was invited to the last sitting." This is another incorrect statement. The English diplomat in question is a personal friend of mine, of many years standing, and had been invited to dinner that evening by Frau von Dirksen. Dr. Kröner stated that "the diplomat—an English officer of high rank—was not 'in the know,'" thus implying that he had no knowledge of psychic phenomena. As a matter of fact, I may inform Dr. Kröner that this gentleman possesses infinitely more knowledge of the subject than Dr. Kröner, and if he were asked to express his opinion upon the Berlin sittings, Dr. Kröner would find them to be strangely and decisively opposed to all the assumptions contained in his report.

Dr. Kröner goes on to say: "I came expecting that at this sitting nothing would occur. Valiantine certainly expected on the last night an unveiling attack—especially when he saw me (Dr. Kröner) coming in. . . . He must have known that he had had several mishaps and that we had come *more or less* behind his tricks . . . he felt himself sitting on gunpowder."

Such assertions are absolutely infantile. To suggest that Valiantine, against whom no allegations of fraud had been made by Dr. Kröner, or any of the other sitters, should imagine there would be an unveiling attack when he saw Dr. Kröner coming in on that last night is utterly ludicrous. For a whole fortnight, during a series of sittings in a hostile atmosphere, sittings which must have occupied in actual time between twelve and fourteen hours, with all the opportunities afforded them of discovering fraud, and despite all the many and varied attempts to "unveil" him as such, they had succeeded in discovering *nothing*. Why, then, should Valiantine, for one moment, anticipate or fear anything upon this particular occasion?

In Dr. Kröner's report he publishes his "Affirmation in Lieu of Oath." This is a valueless and absurd document. He carefully avoids making any direct accusations whatever, and timidly makes such statements

as: "I have made the following observations of *seeming* swindle. . . . There was a restlessness and a creaking of the floor, *just as if* someone were moving and walking about. . . . The 'spirit voices' *nearly always* sounded as if they were being spoken through a trumpet." Does Dr. Kröner, while posing as a scientific researcher, presume to offer terms such as "seeming," "just as if," and "nearly always" as either proof or evidence? And does he presume to call this an "exposure"?

Then follow the reports of eight of the other sitters. While the whole of Dr. Kröner's personal records consists only of unfounded assumptions and assertions which are valueless from a scientific or evidential point of view, he throws the entire onus of *direct* allegations on to two women who were present—Frau Kröner and Frau von Dirksen. It is peculiar that of the very large number of sitters during the series in Berlin, the only direct allegations made—allegations which can be proved as false—emanated *not* from any experienced researcher, but from two women, neither of whom possesses any knowledge whatever of psychics, and both of whom have shown themselves to be of the emotional and occasionally hysterical type of character.

### *Frau Kröner's Report and Affirmations*

Frau Kröner's report of the one and only sitting which she attended on May 7, 1929, is printed in Dr. Kröner's paper. In her opening paragraphs she states: "At the wish of the medium the hostess told us to sit up straight, not to fold hands, or cross feet, or put the feet forward." Neither Valiantine nor I ever refer to sitters "putting their feet forward." They are merely requested to sit up straight and not to cross their knees. This is the regularly established condition in all "voice" sittings. It is significant, however, that while Frau Kröner states she was requested (in German by Frau von Dirksen) not to put her feet forward, she entirely ignored this request, and, as she herself confesses later, occupied the entire time, in compliance with her husband's instructions, in "fishing about with her feet."

Frau Kröner was seated on Valiantine's left. She states that a number of touches were recorded by the sitters, and goes on to say: "I also was touched especially on the right side of my head. Later on my right knee was touched, and I became very frightened and

shrieked out." What sort of person is this who poses as a psychic investigator, and whose mental condition is such that at the first sign of phenomena she becomes frightened and shrieks out?

Immediately after this she states: "I observed that the luminous ring on the trumpet was not to be seen for some time. Shortly after, touches occurred to the sitters on the other side of the room. At the time the luminous ring was darkened. *I had the distinct feeling as if somebody was slowly creeping past me and I made my observations known.*"

It is imperative for me (H.D.B.) to analyse in detail every statement made by Frau Kröner, because in all her suppositions, assumptions and allegations, she contradicts herself in a most damning manner. It is essential to reconstruct the scene very carefully.

Frau Kröner is seated next to Valiantine. The luminous trumpet, according to Dr. Kröner's report, is stationary in the centre of the room. From sitter to opposite sitter the diameter would therefore be, according to Dr. Kröner, about four metres. It would, of course, be utterly ludicrous to accept such a statement as "*I had the distinct feeling as if*" as any evidence of fact, but, apart from this, Frau Kröner utterly fails to realize that if Valiantine was fraudulently touching the sitters on the *other* side of the room then the luminous ring on the stationary trumpet would *not* have been darkened or obscured to her *on her side*. It would only have been obscured to the sitters on the opposite side. And why, when she had the distinct feeling of somebody slowly creeping past her and touching sitters on the *other side of the room*, did she not immediately feel for Valiantine's *empty chair*, since she was sitting next to him?

Immediately after this Frau Kröner makes the following statement, which I quote verbatim:

"During the first half of the sitting—as the first 'voices' were heard (the 'voice' of the so-called Dr. Barnett, who seemed to come *out of the floor*, but not out of the visible trumpet) *I tried to feel around in the space between Valiantine and the trumpet*. I slowly lifted my leg to a height of about one metre. I knocked against some metal object, which hit elastically out at the top—just as if Valiantine was holding it in his hand. After this all phenomena stopped until a 'voice' *out of the air* was heard to say: 'Somebody has interrupted.' Here-

upon the medium called for a pause, although we all assured him that we had kept our legs quiet." Here, unfortunately, the lady lied, doubtless under instruction.

Let us examine this extraordinarily contradictory statement. Frau Kröner says that she "heard the 'voice' of the so-called Dr. Barnett which seemed to come *out of the floor*, and then tried to feel around in the space between Valiantine and the trumpet." What did she discover when she was feeling around in this space? *She found nothing.* Had Valiantine got up from his chair to speak into the trumpet when she heard the "voice" of Dr. Barnett she would inevitably have caught him bending down during the time she was feeling around. By making this statement Frau Kröner confirms the fact that the phenomena were genuine. She states that she not only felt about with her hands but with her feet, since she says she lifted her leg to the height of one metre and knocked against some metal object. It is a difficult and awkward matter for anyone to lift a leg to the height of one metre in a sitting position, and why did Frau Kröner adopt this strange acrobatic course instead of stretching out her hand, which would not only have been infinitely easier, but which would have given her far greater radius of reach, in addition to making a certain discovery of fraud—if fraud existed.

She records that a "voice" from the air was heard to say: "Somebody has interrupted," and immediately afterwards confesses that she deliberately lied when saying: "We all assured him that we had kept our legs quiet." After this she states that: "Suddenly a terrible thundering voice of an Indian above my head was heard. Naturally I was fairly shocked." Why should she be shocked if, as she alleges, all these "voices" were fraudulently produced by Valiantine?

I will now analyse her final statements, which I quote verbatim. "Shortly afterwards the sitter on my left—Student Doring—was called upon by a whispering voice, which sounded *very near to his face*. I bent forward very near to Valiantine and heard with absolute certainty how he *seemingly* whispered into an empty object. I could be absolutely certain that the origin of the voice was out of his (Valiantine's) mouth, about *one metre away from where the voice could be heard by the sitters.*"

Let me reconstruct the position of the sitters. Frau Kröner was on Valiantine's left, and Student Doring was

seated on Frau Kröner's left. Therefore, according to Dr. Kröner's own approximate measurement of a metre between each chair, allowing that the seat measurement of the chairs would be about half a metre, the distance between Valiantine's face and Student Doring's face would be *three metres* (or ten feet). Frau Kröner definitely states that the whispering "voice" speaking to Student Doring sounded *very near his face*. She then bent forward very near to Valiantine and alleges she heard him "seemingly" whispering into the empty object. For such a statement to be true, this would necessitate Valiantine possessing a trumpet nearly three metres long, but Frau Kröner deliberately discredits herself and exposes her own false statement by saying herself that the "voice" was heard by the sitters *only one metre away*. Therefore, by her own statement the "voice" would be heard, not, as she says, by the other sitters very near to Student Doring's face, but immediately to the right hand side (by measurement) of her own chair. For the "voice" to be heard very near Student Doring's face it would be necessary for Valiantine to be speaking immediately in front of Frau Kröner's *own chair*, where she would have discovered him immediately. There is no corroboration whatever for Frau Kröner's allegation, and had such a stupid attempt on the part of Valiantine been made, he would inevitably have been discovered by several others during the fortnight's series in Berlin.

There is one point of paramount importance. Frau Kröner states in her report that the sitters were touched on the other side of the room, and says: "I had the distinct feeling as if somebody was slowly creeping past me and I made my observations known." Dr. Kröner states that "she (Frau Kröner) also noticed the creaking of the floor as if somebody might be walking about." These points should be noted very carefully. If Frau Kröner heard the floor creaking and had the distinct feeling as if somebody was slowly creeping past her, since she had received explicit instructions from Dr. Kröner to "investigate by feeling about," *why did she not immediately feel and discover Valiantine's empty chair?* This is palpably the first thing that even the most stupid or inexperienced investigator would do. Not only could she have done this, but she could easily, by taking only one step, have sat herself in Valiantine's empty chair, and exposed him *in flagrante*. Why, after

all these concocted allegations, was this not done? The answer is that never for one moment, during the whole of these sittings, did Valiantine move from his chair. That there were innumerable and continuous attempts made by the sitters to discover this empty chair is certain. Not only Frau Kröner but Frau von Dirksen and many other sitters, who at different times sat on either side of Valiantine during these séances, had the most obvious means of discovering him at any time or moment during any one of the series of séances held in Berlin.

Students who are charitably inclined may seek to excuse Frau Kröner as a woman suffering from emotional stress, and whose imagination of fraud ran riot. Those less charitably inclined can only, upon her own statements, conclude that her report is a concoction of falsities, composed carelessly by her under the influence of the fixed theories of her husband, Dr. Kröner.

### *Frau von Dirksen's Report and Affirmations*

I will now deal with Frau von Dirksen's printed report. This appears to have been written with the assistance of Dr. Kröner, and parts of it correspond so closely in form and style with Dr. Kröner's work as to suggest dictation. Evidence of this is shown by the fact that she repeats Dr. Kröner's own remarks and theories regarding control and conditions, and also records practically word for word the observations made by Dr. Kröner and the assumptions he had evolved.

An abbreviation is also printed of Frau Kröner's report in the form of an "Affirmation under Oath." This affirmation contains, in a condensed form, the allegations made in her report with a more frequent use of the qualifications "seemingly" and "apparently."

Frau von Dirksen tabulates her report in fifteen numbered statements.

In Point 1 she states: "The medium asked for absolute darkness. The keyholes and cracks in the doors must be covered."<sup>1</sup>

Point 2 refers to Valiantine refusing control unless all the sitters were also controlled by hand and mouth. She

<sup>1</sup> This is the usual and the correct procedure at a "direct voice" séance. As I shall show later, however, in dealing with her report, Frau von Dirksen contradicts her own statement.

states: " Nobody could be found to risk any sitting under the conditions made by the medium."<sup>1</sup>

Point 3. Frau von Dirksen states that when holding sittings " the medium always arranged for one of his foreign friends to sit with him." Does Frau von Dirksen insinuate that I (H.D.B.) or Mrs. Bradley were accomplices in fraud? If so, then her attitude to me in her letter of May 12 proves either that she did *not* think so, or that she was acting in a peculiarly deceptive and treacherous manner towards us. It was absolutely right to insist that either Mrs. Bradley or myself should sit with Valiantine. Had we not done so it would have been a far more difficult task to contend with the allegations which were evolved.

Frau von Dirksen states in Point 4 that " it was strictly forbidden to bend forward and stretch out either foot or arm." I (H.D.B.) personally gave instructions to the sitters. It was not strictly forbidden to bend forward or to stretch out either foot or arm. I instructed them to sit up straight and not to cross their legs. It might be observed, however, that although Frau von Dirksen states that it was strictly forbidden not to bend forward and stretch out feet or arms, the sitters, on their own confession, did all these things.

Points 5 and 6 refer to the gramophone music, and states: " In the intervals loud conversations were asked for, evidently to arrest the attention and to distract the suspicious noises." This is a false statement. Loud conversations were not asked for. I only instructed the sitters to talk generally in order to keep up the vibrations. As for distracting attention from suspicious noises, why, if the suggestion is that this was to cover the movements of the medium, did they not immediately discover him?

Point 7. Frau von Dirksen states that the " so-called independent voices of the Guides always sounded *as if* they were being spoken through a trumpet, and I very soon recognized the altered voice of the medium, particularly his own laugh, and especially the ' voice ' of Honey sounded like an altered man's voice." This is false observation, for the " voices " of Valiantine's Guides have been heard by many hundreds of experienced researchers. Their voices do *not* sound as if they are

<sup>1</sup> Why should they refuse, and what reason had they for doing so? Valiantine's demand was absolutely justifiable, because it is now proved that several of the sitters acted in a fraudulent manner themselves, and admit having done so.

coming out of the trumpet, and it is a strange assertion on the part of those who have had no previous experience of "voice" séances whatever, to say that they very soon recognized the "voice" of the medium, whereas the greatest researchers in Europe have entirely failed to do so, and have agreed that the various "voices" are entirely different in character, tone and personality. I personally have spoken to these various Guides on innumerable occasions for over six years. I know their "voices," their characteristics, and their personalities as well as I know those of my most intimate friends. They have spoken to me at Valiantine's sittings and, on many occasions, at sittings at which Valiantine *has not been present*. I know their "voices" and so do at least five hundred other people. Therefore I assert with emphasis that Frau von Dirksen is handicapped by her suspicions, and distorted in her imagination, when she makes the utterly false and absurd statement that she "very soon recognized the altered voice of the medium."

Point 8. Frau von Dirksen refers to the independent voices failing to bring the slightest proof of identity. She says: "They gave a 'misty' sort of breath, or rather, 'snoring tones,' which either came through the trumpet or seemingly through a second trumpet, which was, as far as we were concerned, invisible, and the existence of which was held secret from us. The few German words which could be understood were spoken with an English accent." There was no "second trumpet," and the levity with which the suggestion is made, with the qualification "*seemingly*," is again typical of the Kröner methods of scientific investigation.

Point 9. Frau von Dirksen states: "Once, accidentally, I dropped my left arm from the arm of the chair (at the fourth sitting) and clasped a warm living hand, which was very near to my left knee, seemingly ready to touch me. This hand drew back at once. But all the same I felt the jacket sleeve belonging to this hand. At that time Valiantine sat at my left side." I (H.D.B.) was personally present at this sitting. It was after this particular sitting that Frau von Dirksen, in talking to me alone, said: "We believe in you implicitly, but are you sure that it is not Valiantine who touches the sitters?" I asked her what prompted her to ask this question, and she then said: "Because I *thought* I felt a hand quite close to me." She said nothing whatever about a coat sleeve. She added this afterwards. I told

her that such an action on the part of Valiantine would be absolutely illogical, and that I regarded any psychic touches as of no value whatever in proof of phenomena, and a fraudulent touch would merely represent an act of lunacy on Valiantine's part. Frau von Dirksen then expressed her regret that she had mentioned the thought which had crossed her mind. It should here be noted that these are the only points that Frau von Dirksen can evolve in regard to the whole of the series of the sittings held in her house, at all of which either I or Mrs. Bradley was present. She attended every one of these nine sittings, and sat next to Valiantine practically the whole time. She was suspicious throughout and purposely gave Valiantine a creaking chair to sit on at the very first sitting. With such exceptional opportunities as she had for observation and for the discovery of fraud on the part of Valiantine, if such fraud existed, the only semblance of evidence she can bring forward is her statement that once she clasped a warm hand, seemingly ready to touch her, and is unable to offer a shadow of proof that this hand was Valiantine's. If she *thought* she touched Valiantine's hand at the fourth sitting, then, as it is recorded that sitters in all parts of the room were touched, surely both she and the other sitters would have been able to have caught hold of Valiantine's hands and thus have exposed him.

It is only when Frau von Dirksen reports upon the three private sittings she had *alone* with Valiantine that she makes any direct accusations against him. It should be noted that the allegations which she makes have no corroboration whatever; no witnesses were present. These are the only occasions upon which Mrs. Bradley or myself were not present, therefore Frau von Dirksen feels herself free to make any allegations she may choose against Valiantine, knowing that such statements cannot be checked or refuted by an expert witness. It therefore becomes in these three instances a question of her word against Valiantine's. Valiantine at this time had to his credit the remarkable records of phenomena produced under his mediumship in various parts of the world during the last ten years, published in several books in practically every European language, by authors of the very highest repute. The reports and records contained therein are attested to by eminent men of science, medicine, politics, literature and law. It is against these records that we have to consider the statements made by

Frau von Dirksen, whose reputation is quite unknown internationally, who possesses no experience whatever of psychic phenomena, who is entirely ignorant of its laws, and who displays, as I shall show, not only inefficiency, ignorance, and gross contradiction in her reports of these three private sittings, but, as I shall prove, gives a deliberate falsification of the actual happenings.

I must analyse meticulously each sentence of Frau von Dirksen's report concerning the allegations she has made against Valiantine. In her sittings with him alone she opens point 10 by stating: "The *real* proof of swindle I had during an afternoon private sitting, while Valiantine sat with me alone." It is significant that Frau von Dirksen refers to this as a *real* proof, since she herself apparently realizes that none of her previous points can be judged as *real*, or possessing any semblance of credible evidence. Frau von Dirksen then goes on to state: "The room was absolutely darkened, but Valiantine overlooked a small crack of the door through which the light fell on him, especially when he bent forward to speak into the trumpet, which stood before him on the floor. Although I drew his attention to this light he said: 'It does not matter.' Either he believed one could not see him, or he thought me a particularly stupid fool. In this way I also saw the second trumpet through which Bert Everett spoke from a height. I also saw how this trumpet rose and sank—all depending if Valiantine wanted the voice to come from a height or from the floor." The whole of this statement is a concoction, and it can definitely be proved as such by any student who cares to rehearse the séance described by Frau von Dirksen. In an absolutely darkened room it would be utterly impossible to see various movements she describes. All it would be possible to see from the interior of an absolutely darkened room would be the *obscuration* of the light of the small crack in the door. Nothing whatever of any description could possibly be recognized under such circumstances. Even to observe obscuration it would be necessary for both sitters to be seated in a direct straight line with the small crack in the door. This would involve both Valiantine and Frau von Dirksen holding this sitting in the most awkward and unnatural positions in the room. Is it likely that Valiantine, with his vast experience of "direct voice" séances, would deliberately choose such an absurdly unusual position for sitting? (I will later give Valiantine's description of this sitting, and the

positions occupied by him and Frau von Dirksen, but first I will deal with the allegation upon her own statement.) Frau von Dirksen states that *the light fell on him*. This is an obviously false statement. The light seen through the small crack of closed door casts no ray into the interior. To make a short, plain statement of truth is a simple matter, but to invent allegations of incidents which could not occur is much more intricate. This particular afternoon sitting took place, she states, on Saturday, May 11. That is, only two days before Valiantine left Berlin, and after he had been staying in Frau von Dirksen's house for twelve days, during the whole of which time she was seeking to discover him in fraud. She then makes the amazing statement: "I drew his attention to this light and he said: 'It does not matter.'" Is it logical to imagine for one moment if Valiantine were sitting with the deliberate intent of cheating, that when Frau von Dirksen, as she alleges, drew his attention to this purported light, he would be so utterly foolish as to invite his trickery to be exposed by saying: "It does not matter"? If a faint crack of light was showing through the door, then a remark from Valiantine that "it does not matter" is evidence of his genuineness.

Frau von Dirksen goes on to say that she "also saw a second trumpet," and states how this trumpet "rose and sank." There was *no* second trumpet, and even if there were it would have been utterly impossible for her to see it. All that anyone could observe under such conditions would be a partial obscuration if any object passed in a direct straight line with the crack of the door. Why did she not discover this "second trumpet" after the sitting? Valiantine could not conceal a large metal instrument about his person.

Frau von Dirksen, inexpert and careless in her allegations, omits to indicate whether she or Valiantine faced the crack of the door. The only possible way for her to observe even obscuration would be for her to be facing the door, in a direct straight line, and for Valiantine to have his back to it. If she had her back to the door then she could see nothing at all. If Valiantine was seated with his back to the door, then his body would obscure the light to the top of his head, and it would be utterly impossible for Frau von Dirksen to observe the trumpet sinking to the floor. Beyond this, even to obtain a partial obscuration of the alleged light above the top of his head,

it would be necessary for Valiantine to raise the trumpet straight in front of his face in a direct line with his nose. But if, with fraudulent intent, he raised it, in an obviously natural manner either with the left or the right hand, it would be automatically at an angle from which there would be no obscuration whatsoever. It must be emphasized that even had it been possible for Frau von Dirksen merely to observe obscuration this would be no proof of fraud, but to assert that she actually saw the various incidents which she enumerates is a false statement.

Frau von Dirksen states that the "so-called voice of her dead husband spoke here for the first time—distinct and unconnected and especially in English . . . he was not able to give any proof of identity on any account. . . . The voice was still speaking weakly and whispering." I am not in any way surprised that this "voice" was unable to maintain any fluency of conversation. I will, however, deal later with the entirely contradictory statements made by Frau von Dirksen to Mrs. Bradley and Valiantine.

Point 11. Frau von Dirksen states: "The most disgusting thing was the so-called materialized hand, which Valiantine held before my face about one metre away, on which, through light coming through the crack of the door, I distinctly could see the sleeve belonging to Valiantine; seemingly he had his hand or glove painted with luminous paint, which Dr. Quade had left behind. I had already seen this hand about two metres away, so he called my attention to it. Now I begged that the hand might come nearer—I could not see it distinctly. It came nearer to me, about one metre away, whereupon, as I have already said, I could see the sleeve, the light falling through the crack of the door." In addition to this statement, in her "Affirmation in lieu of Oath" she states: "I saw his hand so distinctly that I could recognize it as the **SMALL, DELICATE, PLUMP HAND OF VALIANTINE**, which had not the slightest resemblance to the large, strong hand of my husband. I also remarked at once that it was not the hand of my husband. After the sitting Valiantine begged me to give him a testimony that I *had* seen the materialized hand of my husband. This, however, I declined to do."

The whole of this statement is an invention on the part of Frau von Dirksen, who states clearly and distinctly that she recognized the **SMALL, DELICATE, PLUMP**

**HAND OF VALIANTINE.** Valiantine is an exceptionally short man, his actual height is five feet four inches, and Frau von Dirksen carelessly assumed, when fabricating her report, *after* Valiantine had left Berlin, that he would naturally possess small and delicate hands. Unfortunately for Frau von Dirksen, the physical facts of the case confound her allegations. So far from his hands being small, Valiantine's hands are long, broad and heavy. They are actually so big that they are the same size as those of the average man of over six feet in height.

Mr. Noel Jaquin, a well-known expert on hands, has written two scientific books on the subject. He has taken the imprints of the hands of most of the famous men in England, and has in his possession the imprint of Valiantine. Immediately I read Frau von Dirksen's statement in Dr. Kröner's report, I got into communication with Mr. Noel Jaquin, and procured from him a report upon the size of Valiantine's hands, and also a photograph of the imprint. (This photograph was published in Germany.) The following is Mr. Noel Jaquin's verbatim report:

I have in my possession the actual imprints of George Valiantine's hands, left and right; these were taken by myself, and I would describe Valiantine's hands as long, broad and heavy.

#### *Valiantine's hand*

Length of hand (finger-tips to base of palm)  $7\frac{1}{10}$  inches.

Width across base of fingers  $3\frac{3}{10}$  inches.

Length of middle finger  $3\frac{3}{10}$  inches.

Length of little finger  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Valiantine is a short, rather heavily built man. Compare the measurements of his hands with those of Sir Oliver Lodge, who is over 6 feet in height.

#### *Sir Oliver Lodge's hand*

Length of hand (finger-tips to base of palm)  $7\frac{1}{10}$  inches.

Width across base of fingers  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Length of little finger  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

#### *Bernard Shaw's hand*

Length of hand (finger-tips to base of palm)  $7\frac{1}{10}$  inches.

I have purposely chosen two hands of big and tall men. My own hand is not abnormally small, and I am about the same height and build as Valiantine, making allowance for age.

*My own hand*

Length of hand (finger-tips to base of palm)  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
(Signed) NOEL JAQUIN.

Here is irrefutable proof that Frau von Dirksen's allegations are valueless concoctions.

It may also be added that never has such an illogical statement been made as that contained in her affirmation when she says: "I remarked at once that it was *not* the hand of my husband. After the sitting Valiantine begged me to give him a testimony that I *had* seen the materialized hand of my husband." Had this concocted incident occurred how could Valiantine possibly know what the hand of her husband was like, and after her remarking, "it was not the hand of my husband," is it conceivable that anyone but an idiot would ask for a testimony from her that she *had* seen her husband's hand? Not one word did Frau von Dirksen ever mention in regard to *her invention* of the materialized hand, either to Valiantine, or to Mrs. Bradley, while they were in Berlin. The first news of such an allegation was conveyed in Dr. Kröner's report, which was published in October—over four months after the sitting and long after Valiantine had returned to America.

I wrote to Valiantine, and forwarded him an extract of Frau von Dirksen's allegations. Valiantine replied to me at once, as follows:

"I recollect that I sat one afternoon with Frau von Dirksen in the dark. You are well aware of the fact that what she says is a deliberate lie. In the first place, I sat in the corner of the room, and there was *no* light coming in at all. We sat nowhere near the door, and we had what I call a good sitting, which Frau von Dirksen admitted afterwards before Mrs. Bradley and my wife."

The latter statement is confirmed by Mrs. Bradley.

Valiantine's statement that this sitting took place in the corner of the room is absolutely natural. This is the way a sitting with two sitters would take place, because with a "voice medium" with only one other sitter no circle can be formed. I can state positively from my own experiences in such cases that this is the usual position to adopt, in order to conserve the forces necessary

for physical phenomena. Frau von Dirksen's allegation that they both sat in the awkward position of a direct straight line in front of the crack in the door is unnatural and illogical.

On the same evening of the day on which this afternoon sitting took place, a séance with a circle of some eight persons was held. If, as she alleges, Frau von Dirksen had discovered him in the afternoon, when she sat with him alone, she had obvious and unlimited opportunities of discovering him again that evening. She discovered nothing, and would not even dare to allege that she discovered anything. Why? Because Mrs. Bradley was present on this occasion, and she knew that had she presumed to evolve any allegations whatever they could be immediately dealt with.

It was at this particular sitting that the unmarried daughter of Frau von Dirksen, who was very decidedly antagonistic towards psychic research, asked if she might join the circle. She was allowed to do so. According to Mrs. Bradley's report, the Guides, "Bert Everett" and "Dr. Barnett," came through at intervals, saying "Sit up straight," and again, "Do not touch each other," and making other remarks of a similar nature. A spirit voice came through and spoke to one of the sitters, saying it was his brother. The sitter asked "Which brother?" and there was no answer. The voice then spoke again, and the sitter asked "Why are you talking with an English accent?" There was no answer, and after a little while Dr. Barnett announced that the sitting must close. The circle was broken up, but Mrs. Bradley suggested that she and Frau von Dirksen might try and sit again with Valiantine, and find out what was wrong. At this sitting Dr. Barnett came through, and in reply to a question as to why the sitting was closed he remarked to Frau von Dirksen: "Your daughter was reaching out her hand to the trumpet." On leaving the séance room her daughter was accused of this action, but she denied it. However, upon pressure being brought upon her, she admitted that she *had* stretched out her arms when the trumpet was lifted. Mrs. Bradley asked her what she meant by committing such an action when she had been distinctly instructed not to do so, and she replied that she felt as if something was in front of her. Mrs. Bradley told her that all she had succeeded in doing was to upset the séance. Mrs. Bradley then asked two of the sitters,

who had sat during the first part of the evening, whether they thought the voice speaking to the man sitter, saying it was his brother, had an English accent, and they said, in front of Frau von Dirksen, that it "was speaking very good German." After this Frau von Dirksen said to Mrs. Bradley that she was extremely annoyed with her daughter, and that she would punish her.

Is it not utterly inexplicable that after claiming to have discovered Valiantine in a swindle during the afternoon Frau von Dirksen should say, "I will punish my daughter for interfering with the phenomena"?

Point 12 deals with my letter to Frau von Dirksen, and incidents unconnected with the sittings. I will refer to this later.

Point 13. Frau von Dirksen describes the two daylight sittings which she had with Valiantine alone. At a daylight sitting it is, of course, possible to watch him closely and to observe even the faintest movement of his lips or throat. That is the chief purpose. Valiantine has held daylight sittings with a very large number of well-known people, including several members of the English Society for Psychical Research. It would occupy too much space to give the full testimonies, many of which are included in "The Wisdom of the Gods."

Frau von Dirksen does not presume to make any allegations against Valiantine in regard to these two daylight sittings which she held with him. In fact, she is even compelled to state: "Certainly no movement of Valiantine's mouth could be observed." She, however, describes the manner in which he sat incorrectly, and endeavours in a peculiarly inexpert and confused manner to convey that the phenomena could be imitated. She says: "My brother and I were able to imitate the manifestations which occurred at once, without any difficulty, by whispering with closed lips and by holding the trumpet in the same manner as the medium." This is an impossibility. To endeavour to imitate Valiantine's daylight phenomena by such childish methods is an insult to the intelligence of the many and famous researchers who have sat with him. Frau von Dirksen omits to state the actual facts of these two sittings. The details, however, are as follow:

The first daylight sitting with Frau von Dirksen was apparently not successful, but she informed me (H.D.B.), in the presence of Valiantine, that raps were heard inside

the trumpet and that she had heard a "voice," although she could not understand what was said. She stated, however, that she could not see Valiantine's face, because while he held the trumpet his hand obscured his face.

At the second sitting she received some sort of communication, and she told Mrs. Bradley, as at the previous sitting, she could not see Valiantine's face, but that he had told her to hold a mirror in front of her so that she could observe any movement. Mrs. Bradley asked Frau von Dirksen, after this sitting, whether she had received any communication, and Frau von Dirksen replied: "Yes, it was very good. I heard my husband's voice." Frau von Dirksen appeared to be extremely pleased, and Mrs. Bradley then asked her whether she would write her comments, and she replied that she would. She, however, omitted to do so, and Mrs. Bradley again, at a later date, asked her if she would put her statement in writing, and again Frau von Dirksen said she would. She still did not do so, and on being asked for the third time she said that she felt she had not received sufficient evidence. She also added that there was one particular question she had put to the "voice" to which she did not succeed in getting a reply. These are the plain facts of the case. Not a single question or reference of any sort was once made by Frau von Dirksen to any such thing as a "materialized hand."

Point 14. Frau von Dirksen states: ". . . the trumpet, when tapping the ceiling, *seemed* to be thrown up, whereupon it fell twice very clumsily."

This is not evidence. "*Seemed to be*" is not proof.

Point 15. Frau von Dirksen states that "on one occasion we were all compelled to close in into half a circle — Valiantine sitting in an absolutely isolated position opposite to the other sitters—leaving a distance between the sitters on the right and left of him at least one and a half metres." This statement is entirely incorrect. The Valiantine circles were all formed in the usual manner. Frau von Dirksen endeavours to raise a point with apparent intention to incite prejudice, and omits to mention that any phenomena took place, or even to allege that any fraudulent action was observed.

Point 12 does not refer in any way to any incident which took place at the various sittings, but to my correspondence and my conversations with her during my stay in Berlin. Even in this reference Frau von Dirksen makes several false statements. Referring to my letter

written to her in Berlin on May 4 she says: "The reason for this letter was the shock my daughter received by knocking against the illegitimate trumpet." This is untrue. I knew nothing whatever of her daughter receiving a knock from the trumpet. The first intimation of this allegation that I received was when I had read Dr. Kröner's report. There is *no* proof whatever of the existence of such a thing as an "illegitimate trumpet." My letter to Frau von Dirksen was clear and concise. In it I said distinctly that I had held a private sitting at the Hôtel Excelsior—which was brilliantly successful—and quoting verbatim from my letter I stated: "I had a long conversation with 'Dr. Barnett' and asked him for the cause of our comparative failures at your house. He said that from many of the sitters there had produced an atmosphere of distrust which created unfavourable conditions and rendered communications extremely difficult." I went on to say that I was averse from permitting any further séance unless every sitter undertook to observe the proper conditions and not to interfere with the phenomena. Frau von Dirksen's suggestion in her report implies that I (H.D.B.) was an accomplice in fraud, which again is an entire contradiction to her letter to me dated May 11 (two days before Valiantine left Berlin), in which, addressing me familiarly by my Christian name, she wrote:

"DEAR HERBERT,

"Many thanks for all your kindness. I assure you in the next war *you* shall *not* be killed by me.

"(Signed) VICTORIA v. DIRKSEN."

Frau von Dirksen states in her report: "Mr. Bradley asserted that in the full daylight Bert Everett had told him that Valiantine was in danger in my house, and that he must take Valiantine back with him on the following day, or give notice to the American Embassy that an American subject was in danger of his life, and that I (Frau von Dirksen) as the hostess, was responsible. Seemingly one of the sitters intended to turn on a light, which would endanger the medium's life." All these statements are false. I did *not* assert that *in full daylight* Bert Everett had said this: nor did I make any reference to the American Embassy. To illustrate the deplorable manner in which Frau von Dirksen evolves her allegations, the following are the facts: On this

particular evening when I retired for the night, I asked Valiantine to come with me to my private sitting-room. I told him that I did not feel at all satisfied with the situation, and together we held a private sitting. We were told that there was grave danger that one of the sitters might suddenly turn on a light, and that if the sittings were continued, it was imperative that the danger of such an action should be impressed upon Frau von Dirksen. Strangely enough, although it was midnight, Frau von Dirksen came to my room, accompanied by my wife. I told her at once that Valiantine and I had held a private sitting and what had taken place. I warned her that if, after I had left Berlin, such a trick were played upon Valiantine by any of the sitters, it might prove disastrous and that I should hold her personally responsible, and that the *British Embassy* would be notified in case of such an action.

Frau von Dirksen's report is appallingly careless. How would it be possible to hold a full *daylight* sitting at *midnight*?

The rest of Frau von Dirksen's statement in Point 12, although unimportant in text, is also entirely incorrect. There are, I assert emphatically, deliberate inventions upon her part. She winds up by saying that "she promised me she would give her guests the various instructions, although she felt it was too much to expect." What does she mean by this involved remark? Evidently she means that she could not trust her German guests. At the finish of this point she says: "I hoped for either positive results, or to afford the interested sitters an opportunity of discovering the real swindle." Here again she displays her mentality, and here again she illustrates the incomprehensible *failure* of all the sitters at the many séances held after this date to discover any swindle whatever.

In her "Affirmation" with her signature appended, dated June 12, she states: "I have made the following observation of *seeming* swindle, which I give without commentary." Of what value to a scientific investigator is a casual observation upon a "*seeming*" thing? In this Affirmation under Oath she states: "At a sitting held on Friday, May 3, I got hold of a warm living hand, which was very near to my left knee. This hand was immediately withdrawn, but I was still able to feel the coat sleeve belonging to this hand. Valiantine, at this

sitting, was seated on my left." This was untrue. No sitting whatever was held at the house of Frau von Dirksen on Friday, May 3. This was the date on which, with Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine, my wife and I dined with our personal friends, and held a séance afterwards at the Hôtel Excelsior.

The report of Frau von Dirksen was made after Valiantine had left the country, and her "Affirmation under Oath" was signed by her on June 12—one month after Valiantine had left Berlin. Both her report and her affirmation contain statements which I have proved to be false. In the whole of the contentions she has brought forward there is *not one iota of evidence of fraud*.

During my stay at Frau von Dirksen's peculiar incidents occurred, which had never happened to me whilst I have been a guest in any house in any country. Telegrams addressed to me were opened and read and handed to me afterwards. Excuses were made by her butler that Frau von Dirksen had opened them in error. Since these telegrams—which incidentally contained nothing of a private nature—were correctly addressed to "Dennis Bradley—12 Margarettenstrasse—Berlin," it is inexplicable that they should have been opened accidentally. One such accident is possible, but a mistake of this kind often repeated becomes tiresomely obvious. I am not accustomed to having my correspondence tampered with.

#### *Baroness E. von P.'s Report and Affirmation*

Baroness von P. is the daughter of Frau von Dirksen, and whilst I was in Berlin, during conversation she quite frankly told me that she was opposed to the holding of séances and to attempts to get into communication with "spirits." As a matter of fact, the whole of Frau von Dirksen's family were sceptical or antagonistic.

Baroness E. von P.'s report is utterly worthless. It contains no points which could possibly be accepted as evidence of fraud. She states: "*I felt very nervous, holding my hands on my knees and on one occasion shaking intensely as a hard object touched my left knee. Quick as lightning I struck out, and felt a hollow, tin-like instrument, which rang with a metallic sound and withdrew immediately.*" Here again is a nervous and emotional type of woman, who should never be invited to attend a séance.

At the second sitting she states: "I stretched out my leg, whereupon I was again carefully touched by a hard instrument which came from Valiantine's side. . . . After about half an hour I had a strong feeling that someone was standing before me. I stretched my arm straight out and touched a gentleman's suit, whose owner quickly withdrew." If she touched—as she says—a gentleman's suit, and *thought* this was Valiantine's, why did she not immediately expose him?

The statements made by the Baroness von P. prove nothing at all, and the evidence of any sitter confessing to "feeling very nervous and shaking intensely with fright" must always be suspect. All the Baroness von P. succeeds in proving is that she, like the majority of the other sitters in Berlin, was occupying her time in feeling and stretching about.

### *Report of Gräfin Bianca Beck-Rzikowsti*

The publication of the Gräfin's report is an absolute waste of space. She makes no allegations whatever against Valiantine, but merely states her scepticism and mistrust. She says that Dr. Kröner had warned her on the telephone beforehand of his scepticism. The Gräfin makes one false statement. She says that phenomena occurred only when a gramophone was playing as loudly as possible, or when conversation was in full swing.

Invariably at the Valiantine sittings, and certainly always during the Berlin series, when phenomena took place the gramophone was immediately stopped and the sitters were always requested to keep silent.

The Gräfin's report consists of such statements as: "I immediately received the *impression* that nothing was genuine"—"He (Valiantine) *appeared* to be particularly mistrustful of me"—"The voice which spoke *seemed to me* to be that of someone imitating a woman's voice. It sounded absolutely in no way mysterious"—"It appeared to me rather suspicious"—"The touchings through the trumpet did not create the slightest mediumistic impression upon me"—"The ball of light also made no impression upon me." This sort of nonsense, these banal statements, are set forth by Dr. Kröner as evidence of fraud.

*Report of Professor Hans Driesch*

The one and only sitting attended by Professor Hans Driesch was that held on Sunday, May 5, at which I (H.D.B.) was present.

Before the sitting there was the usual large dinner-party. Frau von Dirksen had invited, among other guests, a clergyman of one of the principal Berlin churches, Professor Driesch, Chairman and past President of the English Society for Psychical Research, and a certain Baron—whose name I forget—a charming man, to whom I shall refer later. Conditions again seemed to be disturbed. There was certainly no semblance of harmony among the circle. The German clergyman—good fellow as he may be—was chiefly occupied in voluble duologues with various of the sitters. Certain of the Valiantine "Guides" came through and spoke in their individual and characteristic manner in short sentences. To this I can firmly testify. One of the German spirits endeavoured to speak, but I have no knowledge of what the voice was attempting to say. It was certainly indistinct, and only managed to articulate a few short sentences. The sitting did not last long because it was broken up by Baron —, who asked if he might leave the sitting as he felt ill, and added that he felt as if a tremendous lot of power was being drawn from him.

We stayed on afterwards for a short time, but nothing more transpired, and the sitting was then closed.

Professor Driesch chatted to me for a while when the sitting was over, asking me to visit him whenever I was in Germany, and told me that he thought the "sitting was very interesting," but I informed him that I regarded it as entirely negative.

In Professor Driesch's report he makes no allegations against Valiantine whatever, and he most certainly failed to discover any direct evidence of fraud. *He has had no experience whatever of "direct voice" phenomena;* he knows nothing of the conditions necessary to obtain the phenomenon of "voices," and in his report he contents himself with mildly criticizing the conditions, and offering alternative assumptions. It is interesting to observe, however, that in Point 1 he remarks, "the cracks in the door, through which the light could

penetrate, were covered." This, of course, is the correct and necessary procedure. I am glad that Professor Driesch records this fact, as again it refutes Frau von Dirksen's statement that Valantine said, "The light through the crack of the door did not matter," when she wanted to invent an excuse for saying she *saw* incidents which never took place.

Professor Driesch states that "the trumpet moved several times in the air," and, later, "A few English words were spoken. After this, apparently my father spoke to me in German, but he only uttered a few words which were of no value—and these were spoken in a gruff, quiet voice—possibly to cover the American accent. After this a shepherd spoke to me from Palermo (Christo d'Angelo) with whom I conversed for some time in Italian, but this was nothing of any account."

Now Professor Driesch states that the trumpet was lifted several times in the air, and that he conversed for some time with Christo d'Angelo in Italian. Surely if these phenomena were being fraudulently produced it would have been a simple matter for an expert researcher to have caught the medium. I would personally guarantee that I would catch a fraudulent medium within the first few minutes. Incidentally, I may inform Professor Driesch that to my absolute knowledge Valantine does *not* speak Italian.

As I stated in my report, I regarded this sitting as a negative one, and unquestionably Professor Driesch is entitled to make any assumptions he wishes, but the expression of his doubts, imaginations, and suspicions cannot be accepted scientifically as evidence in refutation of phenomena.

Professor Driesch is a careless determinist if he ventures an opinion upon one solitary experience, which was recorded as comparatively negative, and which was curtailed after a few phenomena by the illness of a sitter.

In the Transactions of the fourth International Congress, published by the S.P.R., Professor Driesch uttered an immortal dictum which epitomizes a certain type of mentality. It should be recorded in history. He said: "It is better to reject a hundred genuine cases than to accept a single false one."

I will leave any scientific researcher, psychical or otherwise, to judge Professor Driesch by such a remark. Is there, in this progressive age, any conceivable branch of scientific research in which a student would reject a

hundred genuine cases because of his fear lest a hundred and first might eventually be discovered to be false? After the expression of such a dictum one may dismiss the opinions of Professor Driesch as possessing no value. According to his own statement they are likely to prove at least 99 per cent. wrong.

### *Report of Dr. Schwab*

Having dealt with a conglomeration of assumptions, suppositions and false statements, it is a relief to read the clear and concise published report of Dr. Schwab. It is a calm and reserved account of the séance at which he was present. He describes the phenomena correctly, and the various sounds of the " voices." He states that the luminous trumpet, when speaking to Baroness Y. on his left, was so near to him that it would have been quite possible for him to have reached it with his hand. He goes on to say that the " voice " speaking in Italian spoke *quite fluently* with the Princess X, and that he noticed from the metal sound of the trumpet that there was no possibility of ventriloquism.

This is a perfectly fair account of what I (H.D.B.) personally judged to be a negative sitting. Dr. Schwab states that at the conclusion Dr. Barnett said there had been " interruptions." These interruptions, of course, occurred at every séance held in Berlin.

I observe with amusement that Dr. Kröner did not request a further affirmation in lieu of oath from Dr. Schwab upon the statements which he made.

### *Report of Dr. Quade*

In Dr. Quade's report he refrains from making any allegations of fraud whatever against Valantine, and his description of the incidents and the phenomena which took place are quite fairly stated. He says: "I had brought with me some luminous paint, and placed some on the upper part (the small end) of the trumpet—the wider end of the trumpet had already been luminously painted. By my placing a luminous ring on the small end of the trumpet one should have been able to observe a hand touching that portion of the instrument. The darkening of this luminous band by the touching of a hand was *not* observed during the sitting, although the trumpet was wafted round in a very wide circle."

It will be observed that although Dr. Kröner in his report endeavours to make a big point of my objecting to Dr. Quade's condition of a luminous band, yet here it is distinctly stated by Dr. Quade that no darkening of this luminous band was observed during this sitting, and that the trumpet was wafted round in a wide circle, in the usual manner that it does at the Valiantine sittings.

Dr. Quade states: "I was touched once on my knee and once on my head. The last touch I cannot explain because Valiantine, to perform this fraudulently, would be compelled to walk through the circle, past the luminous trumpet in the centre, step up to me and put his hand on my head, which would have been most difficult, but it appears to me not impossible." This is quite a fair and logical criticism.

In reference to the "spirit lights," which Dr. Kröner somewhat crudely assumes to have been made by a pocket light, Dr. Quade states: "I should say that the reproduction from a patent pocket lighter seems *impossible*, but there might be other means of producing this artificial light."

Dr. Quade attended only two sittings, and both of these were poor and, as I reported, comparatively negative in results. He merely states that the phenomena *might* be artificially produced, but it must be recorded that he does not make any direct accusations.

### *Baron von L.'s Report and Affirmation*

Baron von L. was present at several of the Valiantine sittings, and he makes two lengthy reports, which are published.

Baron von L. throughout cheerfully assumes that fraud existed, but is unable to bring forward any proof. In fact, in his Affirmation, he can only mention two insignificant points of observation, and neither of these can be ascribed to Valiantine. Baron von L. has, of course, no experience of "voice" sittings. He endeavours to state as fairly as possible the phenomena which took place and his opinions regarding them. Opinions and assumptions, however, are not evidence. The student will observe that many of Baron von L.'s statements are at variance with those of the other sitters. His description of the supernormal movements of the

trumpet are distinct and clear. He said: "It made rapid circles in the air, passing very near our heads and then returning to the centre." Again, "a deep voice came from *out of the middle of the carpet*. To me it appeared to come through the trumpet. The music ceased. The 'voice' of the guide was plainly understood." This is an absolutely correct description of Dr. Barnett's "voice." He also states that "the trumpet was again lifted and remained stationary in the air, in front of Frau von Dirksen, at about the height of her knee."

I mention these points because it should be understood how difficult it would be for Valiantine fraudulently to manipulate this trumpet, which at times touched Frau von Dirksen softly on the face and head, while a "spirit voice" was speaking through it to her. To perform this action Valiantine would have to be within the closest proximity to her and by stretching out a hand or foot she could have immediately discovered him.

Baron von L. states "the various and mostly loud and sudden voices of the Guides 'worked' at the commencement were frightening. Whisperings from out of the trumpet uncanny, and the direct touchings rather uncomfortable." He then proceeds to state: "To me it seemed as if the trumpet was always held by its smaller end by someone when whizzing round the circle, but I *may be mistaken.*"<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the spirit lights, Baron von L. states that it "seemed absolutely to be produced from the wheel of a pocket lighter." This, however, he very fairly qualifies by saying: "It was a surprise to me that I could not see the hand with which it would have been necessary to hold this lighter." Baron von L. goes on to say: "I also imagine to have seen about twenty-five centimetres away from the light, sideways, the outline of a human head." Here follows immediately a very significant statement, which should be carefully studied. It is as follows: "*Although I endeavoured in every way possible to catch Valiantine I found nothing tangible by which I could accuse him of fraud.*"

He continues: "At the daylight sittings for two, when Valiantine holds the trumpet with both hands, one

<sup>1</sup> Of course the trumpet had to be held by someone; it was held by supernormal forces with a materialized hand. I (H.D.B.) have, on dozens of occasions, felt and taken hold of the spirit hands and have had hands and arms placed round me, patting me on the shoulder and talking at the same time as Valiantine himself is addressing remarks to me.

can very easily imitate the whispering voice, with nearly closed lips and without moving them."

In regard to this, I must state emphatically that at daylight sittings Valiantine's lips are *quite closed* and not *nearly closed*, and the faintest movement can be observed by those who sit with him.

Baron von L. makes the following statement: "*Direct proofs of swindle according to my observations have not been established.*"

Baron von L. attended in all five different sittings, and he states: "After some time I felt rather dull on account of the everlasting repetition of negative phenomena, and, lastly, I felt highly disgusted at the *apparent* swindle." With reference to this statement I must point out that feeling dull at negative phenomena does *not* indicate *apparent* swindle.

Referring to the sitting which took place on Saturday, May 4, Baron von L. states: "We had all promised on this occasion to take part without any restraint, and with the best of faith. I told Valiantine of this and expressed the hope that some really interesting phenomena would occur at last, *which, to a certain extent, happened.*"

As apparently the phenomena on this occasion were of interest to Baron von L., it is a pity that he does not state the details.

He states: "I am convinced that Valiantine could not speak German, but evidently he spoke very good Italian, because one voice which spoke on two occasions was particularly clear and absolutely understandable." Baron von L. has no grounds whatever for making the assertion that "Valiantine speaks very good Italian." I repeat that I *know* Valiantine does not speak Italian.

Baron von L. brings not one iota of proof of fraud against Valiantine.

At the conclusion of these various reports Dr. Kröner proceeds again to air his opinions at length. He commences with misstatements regarding the fee which was paid to Valiantine by Frau von Dirksen towards his expenses in travelling to Europe. He states: "Valiantine desired to return his fee of three thousand marks because he was not trusted, and he wanted to end the sittings. He was, however, talked over by Frau von Dirksen to retain the money, and to continue the further experiments."

This gives an entirely false impression of the facts of the case. It was not a question of Valiantine merely "desiring" to return the money—he actually *did* return this money. Quoting from my own records the following are the facts:

"On Saturday, May 4, Valiantine *wrote* to Frau von Dirksen, saying that the conditions were so disturbing that he did not wish to continue and, in the circumstances, would not agree to accept any contribution from her; he therefore returned to her the three thousand marks which she had given him towards his expenses in travelling from America. As I was lunching on this day with a member of the British Embassy I did not return to the house until late afternoon. Frau von Dirksen immediately came to my rooms almost in tears, and profuse in protestations and apologies. She was emotional and effusive, and assured me that she would insist upon the correct attitude of the sitters in future, that the conditions which had been originally specified should be maintained, and that the action of the sitters should be rigidly disciplined. She begged me to rescind my decision, and also implored my wife to intercede for her. Eventually I agreed to defer any decision. It should be mentioned that she went to Valiantine, and, throwing down the letter which he had written to her returning the three thousand marks, said she wished to 'forget she had ever received the letter.' "

Since these facts are quite important, why does Dr. Kröner omit to mention them?

Referring to my letter to Frau von Dirksen, Dr. Kröner states: "The accusations made by the controlling spirit of Dr. Barnett are not true. The accusation was made on account of the bad conscience of Mr. Valiantine." Dr. Kröner has no justification whatever in advancing such an assumption as a direct assertion. I accept sole responsibility for my letter. Valiantine had made no complaint whatever, even to me, before the sitting held at the Excelsior Hotel, beyond regretting that the sittings had proved negative.

Dr. Kröner again displays his colossal ignorance and utter lack of experience, by saying, "What naïveté to expect the alert medium . . . to be killed by an unexpected ray of light!" I have already proved that Valiantine was seriously injured on one occasion by a direct ray of light, and if Dr. Kröner had studied psychic literature properly he would know that there are dozens

of cases recorded in which the medium has been seriously injured in this manner.

Dr. Kröner states: "Mr. Bradley has no right to complain about the atmosphere of mistrust, which does not affect phenomena." Here again, as expert psychical researchers know, Dr. Kröner exhibits his ignorance. "Direct voice" phenomena are the most sensitive of all forms, and an atmosphere of mistrust, accompanied by physical interference, is fatal to obtaining good results.

Dr. Kröner publishes Professor Ernesto Bozzano's letter to Frau von Dirksen. This letter contains Professor Bozzano's record of the successful sittings which were held in Italy after Valiantine had left Berlin. Professor Bozzano's experiences in psychic research and his many illuminating writings on all forms of phenomena, including the "direct voice," have made his name famous. He has achieved a great international reputation, and his records and observations are accepted throughout the world as being scrupulous in their integrity. I am not aware of Dr. Kröner's reputation in Germany, but at present he is certainly quite unknown outside that country. Until I met him in Berlin I had never heard of him.

Dr. Kröner presumes to criticize the statements of Professor Bozzano. I am quite sure that Professor Bozzano is well able to defend himself in any controversy with Dr. Kröner.

Dr. Kröner attempts to criticize a sitting at which he was not present, and I consider it would be a waste of time to deal with the stupid theories he has evolved in his endeavour to explain phenomena he did not witness. In the expression of these theories he exhibits a poor and commonplace imagination by talking stupidly of children's toys—the "Buzzing Devil" and such-like nonsense.

He states "that Valiantine has filled quite a number of sittings by Pocket Conjuring one has seen in Berlin." What has Dr. Kröner seen in Berlin? Nothing. With all his observations in his own report *he avoids bringing one direct accusation with regard to anything he had actually seen.* Dr. Kröner, being obsessed by the question of control, feels impelled to criticize all forms thereof. Incidentally it should be stated here that Dr. Kröner throughout deals only with the physical phenomena, and has no knowledge whatever of the greatest

branch of research—mental phenomena—which involves the one point of paramount importance—evidence of human survival.

One of the most impudent statements made by Dr. Kröner in reference to the very efficient methods of control used at the sitting which Professor Bozzano reports is as follows: “The controls used by you, Herr Bozzano, do not suffice in the least to rehabilitate a discovered swindler. You are certainly not the first and only psychic explorer who has been duped.” How dare he make an attempt to characterize Professor Bozzano as a “duped explorer”?

I am perfectly content to refer any experienced student of psychical research to Dr. Kröner’s report, as an illustration of lamentable and unscientific arrogance, expressed by a man pretentious in his attempts to exhibit erudite knowledge, but failing utterly in his claims to acute observations.

Dr. Kröner presumes to criticize me. He also presumes to criticize Professor Bozzano. He endeavours to pose as a scientist so acute in observation that not the slightest point is likely to escape his lynx eyes. He sits with Valiantine in Berlin and watches his attitude, his manner, his mentality, and, as he assumes, his suspicious character. All these things Dr. Kröner observes. Then in endeavouring to explain how Valiantine could wriggle out of control, he states: “**ESPECIALLY IF ONE HAS SUCH DELICATE SMALL HANDS AS MR. VALIANTINE.**”

What sort of scientific observer is Dr. Kröner?

I refer him to Mr. Noel Jaquin’s imprint of Valiantine’s hand, which proves that his hands are “abnormally long, broad and heavy.”

In a fatuously pompous manner he presumes to criticize Professor Bozzano’s carefully thought-out methods of control. Yet, at the three Valiantine sittings which he (Dr. Kröner) attended, having stated that when touchings were made in other parts of the circle he heard the creaking of the floor *as if* Valiantine were walking around; and having instructed his wife to investigate by “feeling about”—and having also most certainly used every endeavour himself to “feel about”—both he and his wife, who was acting under his specific instructions, failed to establish the one simple and direct proof of *feeling the empty chair of Valiantine*. There was one infallible proof of the medium “walking around”—his empty chair, and Dr. Kröner insults our intelligence

when he asks us to believe that in his anxiety to prove fraud he overlooked this obvious point.

The only indictment that can justifiably be made upon the whole of Dr. Kröner's report is an indictment against himself as an amazingly inefficient investigator.

Dr. Kröner endeavours to qualify his points by saying : " One naturally can object that they can be explained quite harmlessly and that they do not give any direct proof." Not only do his points give *no* direct proof, but if analysed carefully by experienced psychical researchers they give very palpable evidence of the stupidity of Dr. Kröner's mentality.

Dr. Kröner's pathetic and evasive attempts in explanation of his own, his wife's and other sitters' failure are disclosed by his futile excuses, and his endeavours to collect a conglomeration of *indirect* observations are equally obvious. His arrogant comments upon my (H.D.B.) qualifications as a witness I am content to leave to international students who have studied my works, and who know that the whole basis of my psychical research is established upon the *mental evidence* acquired, and not upon physical phenomena. With the assertiveness of the amateur striving to establish himself and his methods in a scientific field, Dr. Kröner winds up his report with the following humorous pontification : " We advise, in future cases, as methods of choice, our *modus procedente*." If such methods achieve as a result the discovery of *nothing*, it is difficult to see how and in what way they merit recommendation.

When I first read the translation of Dr. Kröner's verbose report, I remarked that I hoped all students of psychical research would read and study it, for they could not fail to discover its futility and entire lack of critical ability. Since its publication I have received letters from many eminent German professors expressing vigorous denunciations of Dr. Kröner's methods and arrogant assumptions. I am content to leave Dr. Kröner the task of defending himself against the inevitable attacks made upon his views by his own countrymen.

When my analysis of Dr. Kröner's report was published in Germany, it was strongly supported by articles by Dr. Gustav Zeller, Professor Johannes Kasnacich, Florizel von Reuter, Konrad Schuppe and Dr. Paul Sunner.

Just prior to the German publication a statement was

made by Fräulein Maria Baader, who was, for a while, secretary to Dr. Kröner, and who had been formerly secretary to the late Baron von Schrenck-Notzing. This statement exposes that, from the outset, Dr. Kröner had but one motive, and this motive is proved uncontestedly by her statement. Fräulein Baader, whom I have never met, authorized the publication of her statement, which appeared in "Die Sitzungen mit Valiantine." The translation is as follows:

" SANATORIUM FRANZ-JORDAN-STIFT,  
WAIDMANNSLUST BEI BERLIN-TEGEL,  
*Marz 4, 1930.*

" I saw Dr. Kröner on the day of the *first* Valantine sitting. He said to me, as we parted, after talking a lot about swindle, ' Through one medium-exposure one can become more *celebrated* than through publishing twelve books on Schrenck-Notzing.' " (This remark is explained by the fact that Dr. Kröner endeavoured to get permission to publish Schrenck-Notzing's unedited works, after the latter's death, but this permission he did not obtain.) " Frau Kröner then said to me, ' Yes, my husband *must* do something like that in order to gain the respect of his opponents.' I am in no way hostile to the Kröner couple, but I have made no secrecy of the fact that I do not take their point of view, and I have withdrawn myself from them from that time.

" (Signed) MARIA BAADER."

Here is the most glaring example of the practices of certain types of so-called psychical researchers.

## CHAPTER II

### IN ITALY

*The Marquis Centurione—His visit to England—Professor Ernesto Bozzano—Evidential information—Valiantine visits Genoa—The first sitting—A controlled sitting—Another controlled sitting—An apport—The Marquis collapses—Mr. Rossi leaves the sitting—Mr. Rossi's accusation—A scene—Mr. Rossi's inconsistency—The question of payment—Extraordinary forces—Direct contradictions—Mr. Castellini and Count Bon—Allegations withdrawn—A physical impossibility—An admission of weakness—A Gilbertian situation—Professor Bozzano's report—The successful cross communication experiments between Boston and Venice.*

#### I

In May of 1929 George Valiantine gave a series of séances held under his own mediumship at the house of the Marquis Centurione Scotto in Genoa. Valiantine travelled to Genoa from Berlin accompanied by his wife and Mrs. Dennis Bradley. The party arrived there, after having broken their journey at Lucerne, on the night of Wednesday, May 15. In view of the ostensibly inexplicable happenings which took place at the end of this short series of séances, which extended for only one week, it is necessary very briefly to refer here to the origin of the Marquis Centurione's interest in psychical research.

In the spring of 1927, knowing that Valiantine was in Europe and staying with me at Dorincourt, the Marquis wrote to me saying that he had been advised to do so by Professor Ernesto Bozzano, and asking me if I would visit him with Valiantine in Genoa. It was impossible for me to do so, and I told the Marquis that as he was introduced by Professor Bozzano, if he came to England I would receive him as my guest. He accepted my invitation. While he was here I was able to give him three séances at my house, under the mediumship of Valiantine.

The Marquis Centurione does not speak English, and I, unfortunately, do not speak Italian. Neither does Valiantine nor my wife. The Marquis therefore brought with him Mr. P. E. Rossi, an Italian gentleman, and his wife, a very beautiful and peculiarly attractive

Frenchwoman, in order that they might interpret for him. The three séances held at Dorincourt were exceptionally successful. Practically the whole of the communicating "voices" came through and spoke in Italian, and the Marquis and Mr. and Mrs. Rossi were enormously impressed. On his return to Italy the Marquis Centurione gave his accounts of these sittings to Professor Ernesto Bozzano, who published a report on them in Italy. From these lengthy reports it is only necessary to quote one salient point:

"The Marquis Carlo dei Centurione Scotto, having suffered the tragic loss of his eldest son, and being naturally in a very sad and depressed state of mind, begged me (Bozzano) to approach Bradley in the hope that Bradley could arrange for him to have sittings with the medium Valiantine. After about a month had elapsed, the Marquis went to London, where he was received as Bradley's guest, and was enabled to take part in three sittings, at which his dead son manifested repeatedly, speaking to him in Italian."

In addition to the Marquis Centurione's son speaking to him in his own voice, other evidential information was given to the sitters in Italian, including one point concerning an unknown name given to a sitter, which was confirmed on the following day by telegraphing to Italy, when the name was found to be correct.

When the Marquis returned to Italy, amazed at what had taken place at Dorincourt, he commenced to experiment for himself in order to see if he could obtain the "direct voice." He sat with Mr. and Mrs. Rossi, in addition to other sitters, and in a comparatively short time, from the published records, the Marquis and Mrs. Rossi developed a dual mediumship, and obtained the "direct voice."

The records of the somewhat remarkable phenomena and the various communications received in the "direct voice" have since been published in Italy by Professor Ernesto Bozzano. In addition, a very long and comprehensive book has been published by Mrs. S. Kelly Hack containing the full details of these sittings, which have extended over a period from April 1927 to 1929.

It is peculiar to note, however, that while many Italian spirit voices manifested themselves, and one of Valiantine's Guides, "Christo D'Angelo," attached himself

to the Centurione-Rossi group, and manifested there throughout these "voice" sittings with regularity, yet the Marquis's son never (according to the English translated reports) came through and spoke. It may be interesting to conjecture whether there was some psychological reason for the son being unable, or refusing, to manifest under the Centurione-Rossi dual mediumship.

Some months after the Marquis Centurione's original development, he travelled over to England to hold one or two séances under his own mediumship, chiefly in order for me to observe any phenomena which might take place. Two sittings were held, both of which took place in London at the flat of Mr. and Mrs. Rossi. The Marquis Centurione appeared to me to be suffering badly from nerve-strain. At the first sitting only the "voice" of "Christo D'Angelo" manifested and a "voice" which purported to be that of "Rabelais" spoke. At the second sitting these two "voices" again manifested, but after a comparatively short time "Christo D'Angelo" stated that the sitting must close, and that the Marquis's nerves were in such a condition that he must take a rest from holding any séances for at least another three months.

In regard to the arrangements made for Mr. Valiantine's visit to Genoa, I received the following letter from the Marquis Centurione, dated April 9, 1929:

"DEAR MR. BRADLEY,

"Needless to say that it is with the greatest pleasure that myself and my friends are receiving the visit of Mr. Valiantine in the third week in May. It is understood that I will defray Mr. Valiantine of his travelling expenses to Genoa and back to London. Of course Mr. Valiantine will receive from me a cheque as a remuneration for his services on top of the said expenses. Perhaps you would be good enough to give me an idea of what is the right thing to do in this connection?"

In a letter to the Marquis Centurione, dated April 12, I replied that I considered if he paid Valiantine's (and *only* his) fare to Genoa and back to London, and contributed the sum of £50 towards his expenses in travelling from America to Europe, that that would be sufficient. I should here like to emphasize that there was no possible

question of making any money or profit out of this visit to Genoa. It is hardly necessary to say that Mrs. Bradley defrayed her own travelling and hotel expenses, which amounted to £37, while the bare *net* cost of travelling and hotel expenses of Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine amounted to £74. It will be seen therefore that the contribution I suggested from the Marquis Centurione to Valiantine was less than the actual expenses of the visit. With incidentals, of course, they amounted to very considerably more than the sum I had suggested he should contribute.

Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine and Mrs. Bradley arrived in Genoa on Wednesday, May 15, 1929, and stayed at the Hôtel Isotta.

The first sitting was held on the following evening, Thursday, May 16, at the residence of the Marquis Centurione in Genoa, 12 Via Caffaro. It had been arranged that five sittings in all should be given, at three of which Professor Ernesto Bozzano would be present, as he was only able to stay in Genoa for a few days.

The Marquis Centurione suggested, as he does not speak English, that Mr. P. E. Rossi should act as interpreter, and also that thirteen people should sit each time. Mrs. Bradley and Mr. Valiantine informed them that this was too many, and that the number should be cut down. At this particular sitting there were twelve sitters: Mr. Valiantine, Mrs. Valiantine, Mrs. Bradley, the Marquis Centurione, his wife, Mrs. G. Kelly Hack, Professor Bozzano, Mr. Castellini, and four others. There were certainly too many sitters, but it was stated that if any were left out there would be a certain amount of fuss and animosity.

Mrs. Bradley, in her report of this sitting, states that the conditions there appeared to be fairly good. Various of Valiantine's Guides spoke with the sitters, and the son of the Marquis Centurione came through and spoke to his mother. To quote verbatim from Mrs. Bradley's report, she says:

"It was a most thrilling moment when the Marquise, who is a very charming, gracious, animated woman, full of personality, spoke in the most heart-rending tones I have ever heard, and the spirit 'voice' answered her and then went over to the Marquis. He (the spirit voice of the son) was speaking through Valiantine's luminous trumpet and kept going from one to the other. During

the sitting this spirit 'voice' came back twice. I was informed afterwards that he gave some good evidence about a watch, after they had asked him where it was. Then a 'voice' which, I am told, purported to be his father, spoke to Professor Bozzano, but the 'voice' to me was not very plain. Professor Bozzano, who appears to take a calm, judicial, yet still sympathetic sort of attitude, remarked at once, when Christo D'Angelo came through, that he had exactly the same accent (which is a rather uncommon one) as when he came through at the Centurione-Rossi sittings."

The sitting closed after one and a half hours. I am only giving very brief extracts from Mrs. Bradley's reports.

## II

On Saturday afternoon Valantine gave a daylight sitting to the Marquis Centurione and also to his wife, taking each separately. They both informed Mrs. Bradley that they had received very good evidence. The wife of the Marquis, however, appeared to be somewhat agitated after the sitting.

On Saturday, May 18, it was suggested that as Valantine had often sat under control in America it would be interesting to hold an entirely controlled sitting, in order that Professor Bozzano and other sitters might observe any phenomena which might be obtained. Valantine was therefore fastened to his chair. Each of his legs was tied to the leg of a chair with thick cord, the knots of which were fixed with adhesive plaster. His wrists were lashed in a similar manner to each arm of the chair, and pieces of adhesive bandage were placed over his mouth.

The door of the séance room was locked and sealed, and all the sitters present were firmly tied together by a thick cord, which bound their wrists one to the other. At this sitting the phenomena were eminently successful, and the sitters expressed themselves delighted with the results obtained. The luminous trumpet moved round the circle in the air and was seen by all, and among others, the voices of "Dr. Barnett," "Bert Everett," "Blackfoot," "Kokum" and various of the Guides spoke during the sitting in very loud "voices."

Just prior to this sitting my young son Pat, who was

in England with me, had developed an attack of German measles, and was confined to his room at Dorincourt. I had, a few days previously, written to my wife, informing her to this effect. During this "controlled" sitting my wife asked one of the Guides—"Pat O'Brien"—if he could tell her how young Pat was progressing. "Pat O'Brien" replied to her: "All right! He goes out now." As this remark seemed somewhat strange Mrs. Bradley asked me in her letter, dated May 19, whether this information was correct. It was absolutely correct, because although Pat was confined to his room and isolated (except from one maid, who was attending him) the doctor had given him permission to walk out that day for a while in the garden, so long as he kept apart from other people. Here is another instance of a fact, volunteered by a "spirit entity," which was outside the knowledge of the medium or any of the sitters present.

## III

On Sunday, May 19, a sitting was held at which the editor of *Luce e Ombra* and various distinguished men were present. Mr. Rossi had asked, at a previous sitting, whether Valiantine could again be controlled, and "Dr. Barnett" had given his consent. The editor of *Luce e Ombra* and several others stated that they objected to control as they knew, from the innumerable and attested records of Valiantine's mediumship, that he was genuine. However, as "Dr. Barnett" had given permission, Mrs. Bradley suggested that it would be interesting to hold the experiment under complete control. This sitting was again successful. A number of Valiantine's Guides manifested and spoke; the spirit "voice" of the mother of one of the sitters spoke in Italian, and Mrs. Bradley was told afterwards that this spirit had always spoken in a very peculiar way, and that her "voice" was recognized at once.

"Dr. Barnett" answered several questions put to him by various of the sitters, who afterwards said they were tremendously impressed and delighted.

It had been mentioned previously that upon certain occasions the "spirits" could liberate the medium, and at the end of the sitting it was found that the cords, with the exception of those round Valiantine's left leg, had been rent. It was stated by one of the Guides that

this had been done by one of the "spirit" entities. *Valiantine was still bound to the chair, and the adhesive plaster still remained fixed to his mouth.*

The third sitting was held on Monday, May 20, at which were present, in addition to Valiantine and Mrs. Bradley, the Marquis Centurione, Mr. and Mrs. P. E. Rossi and several others. On this occasion the wife of the Marquis was not sitting. Several of Valiantine's Guides came through and manifested in the usual manner. The spirit "voice" of the son of the Marquis Centurione manifested and spoke in Italian. The "voice" appeared to be agitated, saying: "Mama, mama, where is mama?" He later added that he would bring an apport through. Shortly after this (quoting from Mrs. Bradley's records): "Mrs. Rossi fell into a trance. . . . The sitting was closed and Mrs. Rossi was taken from the room. On the floor, in the centre of the circle, two apports, in the form of two small stones, each slightly less than one inch in diameter, were discovered. After leaving the séance room, when Mrs. Rossi was regaining consciousness, she kept saying that she had been crushed between two enormous stones, and had suffered agony. She was quite white and cold and evidently in great pain. This incident is all the more extraordinary because *Mrs. Rossi did not know that these two stones were brought into the circle until afterwards.*"

On Tuesday, May 21, it was arranged that a sitting should be held under the mediumship of the Marquis Centurione before dinner, and a sitting under Valiantine's mediumship after dinner.

At the first sitting there were present the Marquis Centurione, his wife, a son of theirs, Mr. and Mrs. Rossi, Mrs. Valiantine, and Mrs. Bradley and George Valiantine who sat *outside* the circle. At this sitting, according to Mrs. Bradley's records, "the luminous trumpets whirled round the room, one whirling outside the circle, where Valiantine was sitting. The Marquis Centurione then fell into the condition of trance."

During the sitting held under Valiantine's mediumship, after dinner, the sitters were: The Marquis Centurione, his wife, Mr. Rossi, Mr. Castellini, Mrs. Kelly Hack, and two or three other sitters. Nothing occurred for a time, with the exception of a few short sentences from the Guides, "Bert Everett" saying: "Have patience!" Two trumpets had been placed in the centre of the circle, and these were thrown violently

out of the circle. Each time they were replaced they were thrown out again. "Christo D'Angelo" only emitted one short sentence and then the spirit "voice" of "Dr. Barnett" said that there was a mixture of the two forces. The Marquis then said that he felt ill and had to be led or rather half carried away from the room. *His legs had absolutely given way beneath him —almost as if he were paralysed.* Mr. Castellini and some of the other sitters got up and left the room with him. Mrs. Kelly Hack states that during the early part of the sitting it appeared to her that there were two separate forces operating.

Chiefly for the reason of ascertaining the cause of these strange happenings, Valiantine and Mrs. Bradley agreed to sit on and endeavour to continue the sitting. Those who remained with them were: the wife of the Marquis, Mrs. Kelly Hack, Mrs. Fancelli and Mr. P. E. Rossi. The sitting was a short one. Quoting again from Mrs. Bradley's notes: "The spirit 'voice' of 'Vittorio' came through and spoke to his mother, the Marquise, but the forces were weak and she could not seem to understand him. After this, a 'voice' spoke to Mr. Rossi, who also said that he could not recognize what was said. A feminine 'voice' then spoke to one of the sitters, who asked the 'voice' to speak to her in German. This sitter afterwards said that the 'voice' spoke a few sentences in very bad German indeed. The 'voice' of 'Dr. Barnett,' the Guide, then came through, speaking in his usual tone and manner, and in accordance with his usual methods at a Valiantine sitting. He spoke from the centre of the circle through the luminous trumpet, which was stationary on the floor, saying that the sitting must be closed. Directly the séance was finished Mr. Rossi hurriedly left the room and after a while we all went out."

## IV

On the morning of Wednesday, May 22, Mr. P. E. Rossi and the Marquis Centurione called on Mrs. Bradley at the Grand Hotel Isotta, an hour or so before their departure from Genoa to Venice. Quoting from her letter to me, she said: "They wished to speak to me alone and were shown into a sitting-room. To my astonishment Mr. Rossi then made the statement that at the very end of the last sitting he had distinctly felt

Valiantine lean forward and speak into the trumpet. Mr. Rossi also said that during the early part of the sitting Mr. Castellini had caught hold of my (Mrs. Bradley's) hand and I was touching the back of his (Mr. Castellini's) head."

Mr. Rossi also said that Mr. Castellini had stated that he reached out his hand and caught hold of Mrs. Bradley's hand or wrist. Mrs. Bradley unequivocally affirms this to be an absolute lie. Continuing from Mrs. Bradley's letter: "Of course I was simply furious with them, and demanded that they should at once fetch Mr. Castellini, so that he might repeat this outrageous statement in my presence. The Marquis Centurione then said that Mr. Rossi should not have told me that. Then I asked them how they dared to make a charge against Valiantine, with the remarkable evidences of his genuineness which had been given during the controlled séances. Mr. Rossi replied that he thought Valiantine was a wonderful medium, but that at one of their own personal sittings they had been told that Valiantine would fake on the last day. I told them that if this were the case, Rossi had built up upon his own imagination the charge that Valiantine was cheating. I sent for Valiantine to come to my room and he was told of the charge that had been made against him. He was amazed and furiously indignant. There was a violent scene between him and Mr. Rossi, during which the Marquis kept very quiet. Mr. Rossi then referred to the money side of the question, and said that they would pay Valiantine's railway fare and his hotel expenses, but they would not pay the £50 towards his general expenses which had been arranged.

"Valiantine, outraged at Rossi's allegation of fraud at the last sitting, told them that he would refuse to touch one penny of their money."

It should be emphasized again that actually it cost Valiantine over £70 out of his own pocket to make this visit to Genoa.

Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine, with Mrs. Bradley, left Genoa that morning, disgusted with the treatment which had been accorded to them.

The following day, after their arrival in Venice, Mrs. Bradley wrote a strong letter to the Marquis Centurione, expressing her intense resentment at his behaviour and that of Mr. Rossi. She also demanded that Mr. Castellini (whose address she did not know) should

furnish her with an explanation and an apology for his false allegations against her. Some days later, the Marquis Centurione replied to her in a letter which I shall deal with later, since certain paragraphs are contained therein which, by a curious slip, confound Mr. Rossi's statements.

It is essential to analyse the illogical allegations which Mr. Rossi made against Valiantine. If fraud had been discovered by Mr. Rossi it was his duty *immediately* to announce the fact at the time, in front of Valiantine and in front of the other sitters who were present, in order that an instant investigation might be made. The charge, however, was not made against him at the time, but the next morning, on the eve of his departure. The Marquis Centurione and Mr. Rossi acknowledged to Mrs. Bradley the genuineness and the powerful mediumship of Valiantine, which had been exhibited in previous sittings. A series of successful sittings had been held in Genoa, at which acknowledged "voice" phenomena had occurred, both under control and without control.

Mrs. Bradley can attest, with six years' experience of Valiantine's mediumship, that at the end of this particular sitting it was the "voice" of "Dr. Barnett"—*and his only*—which was speaking through the trumpet. Mrs. Bradley has conversed with "Dr. Barnett" literally on hundreds of occasions. Mrs. Kelly Hack, in her report, records the "voice" as that of "Dr. Barnett." What then was Mr. Rossi's motive in making this incomprehensible allegation? This question involves intricate psychological problems.

It may be noted that the accusation was made simultaneously with the question of payment of money. That question may be dismissed, since Valiantine refused to receive one penny from them. One must then consider very carefully the mixed conditions and the somewhat alarming forces which were exerted during the last two séances. There existed in these circles the elements of extraordinary mediumistic powers. There were the Valiantine forces, intermixed with the Centurione, Mrs. Rossi forces. Whatever may have been spoken in Italian by the spirit "voices" was unknown to Valiantine or Mrs. Bradley, but the physical forces were unquestionably obvious. When the spirit "voice" of the son of the Marquis said that he would bring apports through, Mrs. Rossi fell into trance and crashed her head against the floor, and was carried unconscious from the room. Mrs.

Rossi is not a fragile personality. She possesses an exceptionally well-developed, clever and vivid mentality. She would not be affected by trivialities. After her experience at this sitting, I regret to say that I was informed that she suffered from the ill-effects for some time afterwards. The Marquis Centurione, a man of considerable physical strength and distinctive character, at the next sitting, lost all power of his legs, and was also carried, in a semi-unconscious condition, from the séance room. These are interesting psychological points which may occupy the mind of the student of psychical research.

Both of these incidents were of an intensely alarming and dramatic nature. On each of these two occasions there existed a dangerous mixture of psychic forces; dangerous both physically and mentally. It is important that the effects should be noted.

In a letter dated May 28, 1929, the Marquis Centurione replied to Mrs. Bradley's letter to him, saying that he could not question Mr. Rossi's word, but elaborated the following two important points, and I quote from his letter verbatim :

"(1) Mr. Valiantine absolutely could not notice the slightest touch of the fingers of Mr. Rossi's right hand, because as soon as he observed the body of Mr. Valiantine resume its position in the chair, after having spoken the first time *into the trumpet*, Mr. Rossi withdrew his hand.

"(2) Mr. Rossi at once informed his companions in the circle in Italian in a loud voice of what he had discovered and made known to them *his intention to catch Valiantine in the act*, but it was precisely at this moment that the medium, perceiving, by intuition probably, in Mr. Rossi's voice a warning to his companions, at once suspended the séance a few minutes after it had opened."

These two statements are in direct contradiction to what actually took place. They are in contradiction to Mrs. Kelly Hack's report of the sitting. Mrs. Kelly Hack speaks Italian and, therefore, would most certainly have heard Mr. Rossi say that he was going to "catch Valiantine in the act," if he had made such a statement. Beyond this, both of the points stated by the Marquis Centurione in his letter are in *direct contradiction of the verbal statements made to me by Mr. Rossi himself*,

when I saw him in London on June 18, 1929. In his letter the Marquis Centurione made only a brief reference to the allegations against Mrs. Bradley. All he said was (quoting verbatim): "I also have to state that the word of Mr. Castellini (in whom we all believe) is quite beyond suspicion and he will write you direct."

## v

Mr. Castellini *did not write to Mrs. Bradley.* He was evidently timorous of doing so. Mr. Castellini had received very sharp letters from Count Bon (a Viennese gentleman with considerable reputation for his knowledge of psychical research) demanding that the charges he had made should be proven, but Mr. Castellini declined to reply to these letters. All that he could be induced to do was to suggest a telephone conversation with Count Bon, which he (Count Bon) declined, saying that Mr. Castellini must state in writing the allegations which he had made verbally.

We were led to understand, however, that Mr. Castellini had withdrawn his allegations against Mrs. Bradley, and this was confirmed to me by Mr. Rossi on June 18, 1929.

Mr. Rossi, in a letter dated May 23, said that he would be in London some time in June, and that he would see me (to quote) "in order to supply you with all the information which you will require in connection with the said occurrence, and on behalf of the Marquis Centurione, who requests me to tell you that the money offered to Valiantine covering his travelling expenses is with me at his disposal."

I received no further communication from Mr. Rossi, and it was only because of a letter which I received from Mrs. Kelly Hack in Italy that I heard he was in London I immediately telephoned Mr. Rossi and he informed me he was leaving England on the following day. I told him that it was imperative I should see him that night, which I did. Although Mr. Rossi had been in London for over a fortnight he had made no attempt whatever to see me, although he had written that he would do so.

I received Mr. Rossi quietly and politely, because I wished to hear from his own lips his description of the incident upon which he based his allegation. All that he had to retail was that at the very end of the last

sitting he heard Valiantine's chair creaking on three occasions when a "voice" was speaking. (Mrs. Bradley and Mrs. Kelly Hack affirm the "voice" to have been that of "Dr. Barnett.") On the second occasion Mr. Rossi stated that he *heard* Valiantine's body bend forward, and on the third occasion he (Rossi) placed his hand on the back of Valiantine's right arm and shoulder, and *found that Valiantine was leaning forward.*

I made Mr. Rossi illustrate to me, by sitting in a chair, exactly the action which he alleges to have taken place. Naturally, at the slightest movement the chair on which we experimented creaked, and I at once pointed out to Mr. Rossi that it is absurd to imagine that anyone could sit throughout a séance without innumerable slight movements caused by the natural changes in position.

I then made Mr. Rossi illustrate to me how he placed his hand on the back of the chair, and how far forward it was before he touched Valiantine's shoulder. According to Mr. Rossi's demonstration of this, in a carefully-conducted rehearsal, it would appear that *Valiantine's shoulder was some eighteen inches from the back of the chair.*

It must here be emphasized that at a "direct voice" séance when a "voice" is manifesting, the first essential of the medium and of the sitters is that they shall *not* loll against the back of a chair, and, as I personally proved by act of demonstration to Mr. Rossi, the natural attitude of the shoulders, under such conditions, would be at least eighteen or even more inches away from the chair back. Mr. Rossi, however, in his accusations against Mr. Valiantine, distinctly alleges that *Valiantine himself spoke through the trumpet.* Here is a point of paramount importance, which alone utterly refutes Mr. Rossi's allegations. Mr. Rossi omitted to consider measurements. The trumpet through which he alleges Valiantine had spoken is luminous and can be seen by all present. It was stationary in the centre of the circle.

The position of the trumpet is agreed by Mr. Rossi and by Mrs. Kelly Hack and Mrs. Bradley. The height of Valiantine's trumpet when placed on the floor is *just under thirty inches.* In a close circle of six people the trumpet in the centre would be, at the barest minimum, at least thirty inches away from the front legs of Valiantine's chair. Even at this short distance, for Valiantine to speak into the *top of the trumpet* would necessitate, not merely bending forward from his chair,

but rising from his chair and leaning his head right down to within thirty inches of the floor, *and the distance of his shoulders would then be at least from forty-eight to fifty inches from the back of his chair.* This is an absolute—and on Mr. Rossi's part, an entirely unthought of—refutation of his own statement. *The fraud alleged against Valiantine was a physical impossibility.*

When interviewing him, I asked Mr. Rossi whether he made any mention of his alleged discovery to Valiantine at the time. He replied distinctly that he did *not* do so, but that he informed the Marquis Centurione afterwards. This entirely refutes the Marquis Centurione's letter, in which he says that Mr. Rossi warned the sitters in Italian in a loud voice that it was his intention to catch Valiantine in the act.

I asked Mr. Rossi what the “voice” (which he alleges to have been Valiantine speaking through the trumpet) said, and he replied: “I don't know, I wasn't listening.” A strange and illogical answer!

I asked him whether the “voice” bore any resemblance to the tones of Valiantine. Again he replied: “I don't know.” I reminded him that he had heard the “voice” of “Dr. Barnett” speaking upon many occasions, and asked him whether this “voice” speaking through the trumpet sounded like that of “Dr. Barnett,” or not. Again he replied: “I don't know, I was not listening to the tones of the ‘voice.’” Such vague and inexplicable replies when an allegation of fraud has been made are inconceivable. It will be seen from this that the only basis for Mr. Rossi's allegations rests, according to his own evidence, upon his one statement that he touched Valiantine's shoulder some eighteen inches away from the back of the chair. A correct position in which a medium should sit.

Mr. Rossi owned to me that the statements he had made sounded “somewhat weak,” and he also said that it was only his word against Valiantine's, and that probably the majority of people would accept Valiantine's word. It is, however, not merely a question of Valiantine's word against Mr. Rossi's, but, in addition, Mrs. Kelly Hack's records, added to the affirmation of Mrs. Bradley.

He offered the money for Valiantine's travelling expenses—mentioned in his letter of May 23, but afterwards forgotten. It was, of course, refused. Before he left he told me that they did not desire to have any-

thing published in Italy in regard to this affair, and hoped that nothing would be published in England. I informed him that I should publish the whole of the facts of the case; I believe in absolute truth in psychical research, and in the clear and open statement of facts.

I understand that Professor Bozzano was also requested by the Marquis Centurione not to publish his accounts of the successful séances held under control.

It may charitably be conceived that Mr. Rossi, excited, temperamental, and disturbed at what had taken place both with the Marquis Centurione and Mrs. Rossi, when they were controlled in dramatic and somewhat alarming conditions of trance, may have been in such an abnormal condition himself that he was not responsible for the tricks of his own mentality, and imagined something to have occurred which had no reality, and which most certainly has no corroboration from any of the other sitters who were present at the time.

There is one aspect of the situation, which, when considered, is truly Gilbertian. The Marquis Centurione, Mr. Rossi and Madame Rossi, unknown before to me or to Valiantine, visit me in England in 1927. The Marquis, to his astonishment, speaks to his son in Italian. The Marquis and Mrs. Rossi then develop "voice" mediumship entirely from, and because of, their meeting and initiation with Valiantine. Valiantine then in 1929 visits them in Italy, and is accused of being a fraud. The poet is right when he declares "It's a mad world."

It is refreshing to state that after leaving Genoa Mr. and Mrs. Valiantine and Mrs. Bradley travelled to Venice, to meet Count Bon, who resides there, and who had sat several times with Valiantine in America. They stayed in Venice a week, and the series of sittings held was eminently successful, many remarkable evidences of survival being obtained from the communicating Italian spirits. Count Bon was scrupulously careful as to the character of the sitters in each circle. Two experiments were made at a given time to endeavour to establish cross-communication with "Margery" (Mrs. Crandon of Boston) simultaneously. One of the experiments was distinctly successful and the other one partially so. The details of these experiments were carefully recorded by Count Bon and published in the *Luce e Ombra*.

Subsequently I wrote to Professor Ernesto Bozzano, and asked him if he would be kind enough to let me have a report from his records of the Valiantine controlled sitting. I append it herewith

*Séance of May 18, 1929*

In consequence of a permission asked for and at once granted by the "spirit guide," *Dr. Barnett*, on this occasion a system of control of the medium and of those present was adopted, which deserves to be described.

In the first place, the two doors were locked and the keys were handed over to me. After that, I affixed seals to the two leaves of the doors, using for this purpose strips of "leucoplast" (a kind of *adhesive plaster* used in surgery).

The limbs and the body of the medium were then bound with a stout cotton cord, beginning with the feet, which were held fast by binding them tightly to the arm-chair, at the ankles. At each ligature the cord was cut off, the two ends of which were bound round with a plentiful quantity of "leucoplast," which formed a single body with the ends of the cut cord. This method of cutting off the cords at each ligature was adopted with a view to avoiding the inconvenience found by some in similar circumstances, in which the medium was bound with a continuous cord, in which case, if the medium succeeded in freeing one hand, he caused a slackening of all the ligatures and so managed to deceive, without liberating himself from the bonds restraining him.

The next thing was that the wrists of the medium were bound to the arms of the armchair in precisely the same manner. He was then bound to the back with a cord which was passed round his chest, and he was further bound at the legs with another cord half-way up the tibia. After this, the mouth of the medium was hermetically closed by applying a large piece of "leucoplast," which reached almost up to the ears.

This having been done, measures of control were proceeded with regarding the experimenters, whose both hands were tied at the wrists with a continuous cord—this in order that each should be in a position to control the movements of his immediate neighbours. As Mr. Rossi was entrusted with the changing of the gramophone records and it was necessary to allow him a certain freedom of movement, he was seated last in the circle and was bound like the others, allowing, however, a length of cord to reach forward and *which was handed to me*, with instructions to hold it taut, but to slacken it when the person attending to the gramophone had to change the gramophone record.

Such were the means of control adopted. As soon as the light was extinguished, when the first gramophone record was still being played, the strident voice of "Bert Everett" was heard, who greeted those present, from above: "Good evening, Souls!" Immediately afterwards one of the trumpets rose to the height of about one and a half metres from the floor, and described ample turns around in a vertical direction. A most lengthy dialogue was then commenced with Dr. Barnett, who prescribed a cure for the Marchioness Centurione, to Mrs. Bradley and others. Immediately afterwards, "Bert Everett" again manifested himself, and then "Christo D'Angelo," who held a lengthy conversation in Italian and in the Sicilian dialect. After him, the voice of a little girl who was accustomed to manifest with Valiantine, and after her came the turn of a deceased son of the Marquis Centurione, who reproduced in a very impressive manner the scene of his own death. There was heard, that is, in the air the noise of a hydroplane, which, after having performed several turns around the room, seemed to dash into the water. Lastly, there came "Kokum," who sang one of his wild songs in so loud a voice that he could be heard from the street.

After the close of the séance, I myself carefully examined the ligatures of the medium, which proved to be intact, and I very carefully and slowly removed the "leucoplasster" from his mouth, which adhered to his skin in such a manner as to leave it rather flayed.

(Signed) ERNESTO BOZZANO.

## VII

I have on a former page alluded briefly to successful attempts at cross-communication between the "Margery" circle in Boston and the Valiantine séance in Venice. In view of their interest, these experiments deserve a fuller description.

Certain scientists and meticulous sceptics have often said that if an entity could carry information of a proven fact unknown to the medium and unknown to any of the sitters present, and also unknown to any living person, such an instance would unquestionably prove the intelligence of a spirit entity, and rule out all possibility of a normal explanation.

It should be noted that in this cross-communication test the entity "Walter" manifested and spoke both in Boston and Venice, during the time these two sittings were simultaneously held. In Venice the sitters were all entirely unaware as to what form the cross-communication test would take. The mathematical test of numbers was arranged in Boston, and extreme care was used to exclude all possibility of any telepathic explanation. Even if Valiantine had known (which he certainly did not) that the cross-communication would take the form of a number test of three numbers, selected promiscuously from the thirty-one days of a calendar, the odds against him guessing correctly would be 25,172 to one *against*. But, in addition to this, since the medium "Margery" was also later informed by the spirit entity of the three numbers, which were still entirely unknown to any of the sitters in Boston, then the odds against *both* Valiantine and Margery guessing correctly would be over 633,000,000 to one. I append a report of the experiments.

## VENICE AND BOSTON

*Cross-Communication at Synchronical Times*

Dr. Bon cabled to Dr. Crandon in Boston, informing him that a sitting would be held with Valiantine on May 27. Dr. Crandon cabled in reply that he would hold a sitting with "Margery" (Mrs. Crandon) in Boston at 5 p.m. It should be noted that there is six

hours' difference in Boston time and that 5 p.m. there would correspond with 11 p.m. in Venice.

### *The Sitting in Venice*

This opened at 9.30 in Dr. Bon's house. The following were present: Mrs. Bianca Nunes Vais-Arbib, of Venice; Commander S. Bellavita, of Rome; Mrs. Gwendolyn Kelly Hack, of New York; Mr. Oscar Cosma, of Venice; Mrs. Dennis Bradley, of London; Captain Giovanni Rodano, of Venice; Admiral Z—; Mrs. Bess Valiantine, of Williamsport, U.S.A.; Mrs. Pierina Valle, of Venice; Dr. P. Bon, of Venice; all sitting in circle.

Outside the circle were Mrs. Hilda Tagliapietra, of Venice (at the gramophone), and Mr. Antonio Gibin, of Venice.

In an adjacent room, curtained off from the one in which the sitting was held, were Professor Carlo Del Lunog, of Florence; Mrs. Maria Augustoni, of Venice; Commander A. Lancerotto, of Venice.

As will be seen, this meeting was a large one and the personnel varied. "Bert Everett" manifested immediately, stating that the conditions were ideal. George Valiantine sat in the middle of the circle in a large wooden chair with arms and a high back. The sitting proceeded with much phenomena being manifested, particularly direct voice, fully twenty entities speaking in direct voice up till 11 o'clock, at which time Mrs. Hilda Tagliapietra informed the sitters that the clock (which had a luminous dial and which had been placed beside her) marked the hour of eleven, the time stated by Dr. Crandon for the beginning of the cross-conversations experiments.

The sitting continued, as at first, full of interest. Following the powerful voice of "Kokum," "Christo D'Angelo" asked the time and Dr. Bon replied that it was 11.30 p.m. He then asked that the clock should be placed in the centre of the circle on the floor, facing Dr. Bon. A moment after there was a shrill whistle in the centre of the room. Dr. Bon immediately recognized the characteristic entry of "Walter," the Guide of the medium "Margery." (It should be mentioned in passing that "Walter" does not usually manifest outside the circle of Dr. Crandon.) Mrs. G. Hack, who had had

previous experience with the Boston circle, recognized this characteristic whistle. "Walter" recognized the lady and also Dr. Bon, whom he greeted.

Meanwhile Valiantine had fallen into a temporary trance. (NOTE.—It is only upon rare occasions that Valiantine falls into trance.) As instructed, all present maintained absolute silence. The two aluminium trumpets with luminous bands, which had been previously placed in the centre of the circle, rose in the air, one remaining in front of and the other behind the chair occupied by Valiantine. The luminous clock rose (supernormally) a foot from the ground and was carried round the room. It was deliberately stopped in front of various members of the circle, obviously for the purpose of impressing upon their minds the hour—11.45. The noise of the touching of the small device that controls the hands was heard and the luminous hands were seen to be slowly turning back. The clock was again taken round the circle. As previously, it stopped when in front of several of the sitters and it was noticed that the time had been changed to 11.15.

Valiantine, coming out of trance and sitting upright, said: "I feel stiff all over," and after a while added: "I think we should turn on the red light," which was done. After a brief interval Valiantine rose from his chair, walked to a small table, which had been placed near him, and on which paper and pencil had been placed. No one spoke. Valiantine held his head between his hands and then asked for the blue light to be put on in place of the red one. He then wrote on the paper and handed it to Dr. Bon. There were three numbers repeated two or three times—3.5.10—with a full stop after each number. The sitting was then closed. The clock of St. Marco struck the hour of midnight.

The company then partook of refreshments consisting of fruit and wine. This seems contrary to usual practice; in fact "Walter" was a little shocked, as we will see later.

### *The Sitting at Boston*

The results obtained at Boston in a sitting held on May 27, with Dr. Crandon's circle, at 10 Lime Street, through the mediumship of Margery, were recorded on the same evening. The minutes of this sitting, signed by everyone present, were actually posted at 10.10 p.m.,

as stated by Dr. Mark Richardson, and this is sufficiently confirmed by the postmark, which reads: "Boston—Mass—May 28—1 a.m." The letter was delivered in Venice on June 9, following. Afterwards a detailed account of the sitting was received in Venice on July 1.

The sitting started at 5.9 p.m. (American time). There were present (from left to right): Dr. Mark Richardson (on the left of the medium), Mr. Grandi, Mrs. Grandi, Mrs. Gray, Mr. Fred Adler, Mrs. Richardson, Mr. Bligh Bond, Dr. Crandon (on the right of the medium). Outside the circle: Mrs. Gray, Mr. Begouchi.

Dr. Crandon and Dr. Richardson controlled the hands of the medium, which control was maintained throughout the sitting. The right hand of Dr. Crandon rested throughout the sitting on Mr. Bond's knee. Mr. Bond was entrusted with the materials that had been selected for the purpose of the experiments, which consisted of nine leaves torn from a day-block calendar, each of which bore on the back, in ink, Mr. Bond's signature, and which that gentleman had personally placed in an envelope, afterwards sealing the envelope and placing it in the inside pocket of his coat. Mr. Bond testifies that he had seen only the backs of these leaves and had no knowledge of the numbers printed on the face.

Margery fell into trance at 5.11 and the voice of "Walter" was immediately heard. He stated that Mr. Bond should make certain that the contents of the envelope could not be seen by anyone present until after 9 p.m. (approximately 3 a.m. Italian time of May 28), after which hour there could be no question of thought-transmission from the group in Boston to the group in Venice.

"Walter," as is his custom, joked for a while with a few of those present, and after a short interval, during which it would appear that he had been over to Venice, he said: "I cannot understand a word of what is going on over there, and furthermore, the heat is terrific." (The evening, in fact, was very oppressive in Venice, and the atmosphere of the room was stuffy, owing to the number present.)

At approximately 5.15 "Walter" instructed Mr. Bond to withdraw from the envelope in his pocket one of the calendar leaves and to place it on the table, which was in the centre of the circle. Mr. Bond thereupon in the absolute darkness—which was maintained throughout the sitting—complied with the request. At 5.19 Mr.

Bond, at the request of "Walter," replaced the first piece of paper by a second; and, in answer to Mr. Bond, "Walter" stated that the time was 5.20 and then left the circle for about a minute. At 5.22 "Walter" instructed Mr. Bond to take up the second piece of paper, and to be careful to keep the first and second slips separate from the rest. "Walter" then stated that one of the slips had been dropped, but Mr. Bond searched for it in vain.

Presently "Walter" asked Mr. Bond to pick up the third sheet and to place it with the other two in his inside pocket.

After a few joking remarks Walter said: "Now I am off; please stay together for half an hour; do not worry; leave everything to me. Good evening!" Four raps were heard (a regulation signal) and the sitting was over. It was 5.45 p.m. This is the identical time at which, during the Valiantine sitting, the luminous clock was lifted and shown to each sitter that the time was 11.45. The time exactly synchronized with the closing of the Boston sitting, and the departure of "Walter," with the information of the numbers known only to him (the spirit entity) and to no one else in the world.

In the detailed report of the above sitting it is stated that when lights were put on Mrs. Richardson discovered two of the calendar leaves on the floor, which had inadvertently been dropped by Mr. Bond. This gentleman was somewhat upset, owing to the fact that he had been previously warned by "Walter" that he had let one fall. The lady picked them up and remained beside Mr. Bond until all those present had retired to the library, this precaution being taken to ensure that no one present should be able to see the numbers on the leaves and be in a position to communicate them to the medium or to any of the others present. The three actual leaves, however, seen by "Walter," were safely in Mr. Bond's inside pocket.

The circle sat again at 9 p.m. Margery, with pencil in hand, sat on a small sofa, beside which was a little table with paper on it. She was blind-folded by Mr. Bond and immediately started to write the following message:

"Venice sitting. Valiantine under control. Much whispering—no, silence; I seem to hear the Lord's Prayer. No one seems excited except Count Bon, who is fumbling

with his moustache. More whispering—good thoughts—I don't understand—still more chatter—at least Valantine throws Italian fit—falls into trance in Italy—remains in trance as determined by me. Write 3.5.10. It is all over—there is much eating and drinking—Valantine comes to and goes home—I have said enough—later some more—next sitting Thursday evening. W.S.S." (Initials of "Walter.")

The sitting ended at 9.5 p.m. Mr. Bond then showed to all present the envelope marked "A" together with the three leaves of the calendar which had been shown to Walter during the sitting. These proved to be "Sunday, May 5; Friday, May 3 and Friday, May 10," each of which bore on the back the signature of Mr. Bond, written by himself prior to the experiment.

## CHAPTER III

### AN INDICTMENT OF THE S.P.R.

*My reasons for resignation—The attitude of the Society—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's resignation—His reasons—Mr. Theodore Besterman—Mr. W. H. Salter—The General Meeting—Curious procedure—A significant omission—"A trivial matter"—Numerous resignations—A mass of criticism—Mr. Besterman's trip—His personal unpopularity—"Dreary rubbish"—A deliberate misconstruction—Mr. Besterman and Dr. Kröner—A glaring example—Mr. Salter's amusing suggestion—Sir Oliver Lodge's observations—The objects of the S.P.R.—Their fulfilment—Degeneration—Infantile activities—The barnacles of the Society—Some questions to the Society—A Psychical Benevolent Association—The stultification of its objects—Obstruction to research.*

FOR eight years I had been a member of the Society for Psychical Research, but in February, 1931, I resigned my membership.

The reasons which drove me to this step were simple. Not only was my membership entirely valueless to me, but I had come to the deliberate conclusion that, far from fostering and encouraging research, the Society was not only useless, but deliberately obstructive. In my opinion, under its present direction, the Society for Psychical Research is in itself one of the obstacles in the way of genuine, scientific research and study.

It possesses a séance room which is never used. Never does it hold sittings; never does it conduct investigations. All published accounts of phenomena it treats with contempt, and never does it attempt analysis or constructive criticism. In its bovine incredulity this pseudo-scientific Society appears to me to be equally as stupid as are the great bulk of spiritualists in their credulity.

For myself, in my experiments and investigations I have always endeavoured to maintain a balance between blind scepticism and unreasoning faith.

Facts are facts; proofs are proofs. Neither assumption nor derision are of the slightest value.

Genuine phenomena, when they take place, I accept; fraud, whenever I discover it, I denounce with all the vigour I can assume.

The sole interest for the scientific researcher is his

research; emotion, prejudice, preconceived ideas should affect him neither one way nor the other; his object is to sift the good from the bad, the genuine from the fraudulent, coldly, dispassionately, logically.

In January, 1930, some few months prior to his death, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle resigned his membership of the Society for Psychical Research.

Doyle's letter, giving the reasons for his resignation, was sent to every member of the Society. In it he stated that he strongly resented the tone of the reviews published in the Journal of the S.P.R. by Mr. Theodore Besterman, the editor and librarian of the Society; that he regarded Mr. Besterman as a "slovenly critic," with "very little experience of psychical research," and that he strongly objected to his "insolence" and "gratuitous offensiveness."

He criticized the administration of the Society, which, "originally intended to be a sympathetic and fair centre for inquirers, seems to have become simply an anti-spiritualist organization. Everything which tends to prove the truth, no matter how honourable or sane the source may be, is assailed by suppression, misrepresentation, and every sort of unreasonable and vicious opposition."

He referred to the Society as being in the hands of a small central body of reactionaries, and said that he had waited long in the hope of some reform, but had concluded that it was not to be expected, and that the influence of the Society was entirely for evil.

Now, this final gesture of Doyle was not made suddenly, on the spur of the moment, or on account of any callow expression by Mr. Besterman; Doyle's reasons were far more deep-seated. His determination was arrived at for definite reasons, reasons which he set down in the plainest terms in the concluding lines of his letter. He said:

"I have resigned as a public protest against the essentially unscientific and biased work of a Society which has for a whole generation produced no constructive work of any kind, but has confined its energies to the misrepresentation and hindrance of those who have really worked at the most important problem ever presented to mankind."

The charge is a definite one. Before this letter was sent to the members of the S.P.R. Doyle wrote to me, and

we discussed the whole question. Doyle and I were in entire agreement; we felt it was imperative that some action should be taken, and the first suggestion was that he and I should resign together, and both sign the printed letter which was sent to every member. Eventually, however, we decided that Doyle should resign, and that I should remain within the Society for another year in order that I might observe their future attitude.

At the Annual General Meeting of the S.P.R., which was held at Tavistock Square, February 27, 1930, the number of members present was twenty-six. At this meeting the subject of Doyle's resignation was discussed. I put an important leading question to Mr. Besterman regarding his published expressions of opinion. In order to thwart an awkward discussion, however, the chairman, incorrectly, ruled the question out of order.

A little later in the meeting I had the opportunity of speaking again, and I then severely criticized the reviews of Mr. Besterman, and also the prejudiced attitude of Mr. W. H. Salter, which I regarded as an abuse of his official position as Honorary Secretary of the S.P.R.

At the conclusion of my speech, the chairman, Sir Lawrence Jones, omitted to follow the usual procedure at all General Meetings, and without asking, as he should have done, for any further questions from members, became flustered and said: "I must close the meeting." And that is precisely how the meeting ended.

The report of this meeting was published in the Journal of the S.P.R. for April. It is significant to observe that no mention whatever was made of the indictments contained in my address. The sole reference to any criticism of the servants of the Society was a short paragraph following a discussion on the Society's séance room, which was worded as follows:

"Mr. Besterman, Mr. Dingwall, Mr. Dennis Bradley, Mr. Salter, Mr. Gatliff and others took part in the discussion which followed."

The published report of this General Meeting was incorrect and incomplete. If the minutes were correctly taken in the first instance, deliberate deletions were made.

Since only twenty-six members attended this Annual General Meeting, and the report was printed and issued

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to the thousand odd members and associates, it will be seen that there was a reprehensible suppression of facts, amounting to distortion.

In the March (1930) issue of the Journal of the S.P.R. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's letter of resignation and the replies by the President, the Honorary Secretaries and Mr. Besterman, were printed, with the official comment: "The Council regard this particular controversy as a very trivial matter."

However the Council may have regarded it, it is quite certain that innumerable members of the S.P.R. did *not* regard Doyle's resignation as a trivial matter.

The Journal for March (1930) states that the total number of resignations since Doyle's resignation was six. Since the majority of the members would naturally defer their resignation until the end of the year, *it was interesting to observe that the exact number of resignations at the end of the year was eighty-four.* That the matter was not regarded as trivial is evidenced by the fact that a large mass of the letters which Doyle received expressing agreement, was handed to me to read. A few brief extracts from these letters will convey the opinions expressed by the members of the S.P.R. who wrote to Doyle.

1. "I have resigned my membership. I received no help from it."

2. "I became a member of the S.P.R. some years ago, but it seemed to me that they were doing nothing constructive."

3. "If there is no improvement I shall cease to belong to it."

4. "I am very glad I have nothing more to do with them."

5. "I have many times resented the attitude of that organization and shall not renew my membership."

6. "I have been so disgusted with the hostile attitude of the Society that I have already resigned my membership."

7. "I may say that I read Mr. Besterman's article in the January number of the Journal. . . . I have immediately sent in my resignation to the Society, feeling that it was no help to me in my psychic studies."

8. "Only the hope that there was some chance of altering the methods of the Society would induce me to renew my membership. This year I have come to the same conclusion as yourself that this is hopeless. It

seems a pity that the oldest body of all should be left to people who are ruining it."

9. "I have since left the Society, after having belonged to it since its inception. It seems to me that the S.P.R. officials are running pretty close to the wind, for they are taking money in the form of subscriptions from members for the purpose of psychical research, when by their actions they prevent it."

10. "I entirely agree with all you say regarding the courtesy and the tone of article written by Mr. Besterman, and the general state of the Society. . . . It is very sad to see a Society which has held the position of the S.P.R. in a condition of inactivity and dry dullness, such as is its state to-day."

11. "I wrote to them in the same indignant fashion some months ago in regard to some criticisms that appeared in the Journal."

12. "I received your letter, every word of which I agree with, and my resignation will follow. I have been a member of the S.P.R. ever since it started, but it seems almost condoning dishonesty to continue to subscribe."

13. "I have written to the Society to resign. I paid my subscription for 1930 so I suppose my name will remain until the end of the year."

14. "Unfortunately I paid up as a life member some twenty years ago, never thinking they would funk their own cause as they have. However, I have written to the secretary and asked him to remove my name from their list of members, as I wish to resign."

15. "I received your public protest against the S.P.R.'s unscientific work . . . they only hinder the real and serious workers. I will, of course, follow your example, and retire at the end of this year."

16. "Three weeks ago I sent in my resignation, after over twenty years as an associate member, though not knowing that others had sensed and were ready to protest against the offensive character change which has come over the honourable Society."

17. "Thanks for your bill of indictment against the S.P.R. . . . I read Mr. Besterman's sayings in the Journal for January and before. . . . I think it better to resign my associateship in the course of the year, mentioning the Society's unscientific way of criticizing men of the stamp of Bozzano and Bradley. Since the days of Myers, Hodgson, and Hyslop the Society has sunk deeply."

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18. "Many in Italy will join in thanking you for your stand. If you know Professor Bozzano, his wonderful nature and indomitable courage, you will understand how troubled his friends were at such abuse from such an unexpected direction as the S.P.R."

19. "I have written to the President of the S.P.R. in reply to his circular letter. . . . I laid stress on the fact that the reviewing recently in the S.P.R. Journal has been bad reviewing, quite apart from its animus and ignorance."

20. "I thoroughly sympathize with your feelings about the very serious misrepresentations. . . . I fear they have been unfair in the cases you mention, which is distinctly bad."

21. "That the S.P.R. is at present not 'pulling its weight' in any way, except as a brake on real effort, I fear nobody can deny."

22. "How such a review could have been accepted by a Society noted the world over for absence of prejudice either way is difficult to understand. A loss of confidence in the Society by its members would rapidly result in the closing of the Society."

23. ". . . Lately all criticisms in the Journal of any psychic happenings, or of books with specialist evidence have been destructive, and destructive in a triumphant way."

24. "In the autumn of 1928 Mr. Besterman was here in Munich, and Baron Schrenck-Notzing and other renowned men agreed that the S.P.R. has made a great mistake in sending such a young and inexperienced gentleman abroad, who, instead of increasing the high repute of the Society, only injured it."

25. "I join with you entirely in your indignation. I experienced the same sensation when I read Besterman's libellous article. It is impossible to excuse his offence, no matter how obliquitous his mentality. By that article he has disgraced the S.P.R."

26. "In my opinion the Society has not advanced a single step since the publication of Myer's 'Human Personality.' "

27. "It is with great pleasure that I have learned of your action, and I trust it will be the means of enabling psychic research, as such, to proceed untrammelled by the outworn fallacies of physicists."

28. "I have had myself such illuminating direct experiences that the kind of discussions printed in the

S.P.R.'s Proceedings merely bores me. And it bores others, for I am certain that it is rarely that the best cases of psychical experience are now submitted to the censors in office."

29. "I have written to Mr. Besterman to express my deep regret at the method and tone of some more recent communications in the Journal. They do not conduce to friendly feeling, nor to the progress of the research for which the S.P.R. was founded."

These brief excerpts from the letters received by Doyle are only a slight indication of the opinions of the various members. Doyle handed me the whole of his correspondence on this matter; the perusal occupied me for several hours. There was not a single one among his correspondents who was not in entire agreement with him.

It is entirely incorrect for the Council of the S.P.R. to assert that Doyle's resignation was a trivial matter. Doyle was a man of considerable distinction. He was one of the foremost figures in modern English literature. His reputation is both European and American. His practical experience of psychical research and supernormal phenomena, which extended over the major portion of his life, was infinitely greater than that of any of the present official administrators of the S.P.R.

In 1929, Mr. Theodore Besterman travelled abroad, on a tour of four months, as the Society's representative, and on his return described his experiences with the various mediums. The manner in which he wrote his report showed, in my opinion, that he was not only inexperienced, but utterly incompetent. His report excited considerable indignation against him in Budapest. M. Karl Rothy, the president of the Society for Psychical Research in Budapest, described Mr. Besterman's behaviour during the séances which were held, as rude and ill-mannered. M. Rothy wrote several letters of protest to members of the Council, none of which have I seen published in the Journal.

A private meeting was called by certain English members of the S.P.R. in October, 1929, protesting against Mr. Besterman's attitude, and a deputation of members interviewed Mr. W. H. Salter, who, as an honorary official of the Society, received them in a peculiarly discourteous manner. Mr. Besterman, they were given to understand, was Mr. Salter's protégé, and

any criticism was resented. The implication would seem to be that no member or body of members has any right to object to or criticize the actions or capacity of any official.

The reports published by Mr. Besterman were deliberately negative and antagonistic. Apparently he regarded his mission as that of the representative of an amateur detective agency. At the few sittings he attended he was obviously predisposed to regard all forms of phenomena as doubtful or fraudulent, and in reviewing any phenomena which may have occurred he immediately proceeded to evolve some futile assumptions in his endeavour to explain.

Subsequent writings of Mr. Besterman met with the strong disapproval of certain members of the S.P.R.

Commander Quentin Crauford, R.N., made a public protest. He wrote: "We who are members of the Society, are chiefly regaled with such dreary rubbish as Mr. Besterman has made up in the Journal. Of course Mr. Besterman has not got an easy task before him, because he has disgusted the kind of contributor who would be interesting. . . . The Journal was sufficiently uninteresting before he took it over, and the type of Research Official which the Society manages to procure never gets beyond the fraud hypothesis. . . . He (Mr. Besterman) has a large library at hand, and to have dug up some of these would have been research; but no, he must give us an empty opinion—and not only empty, but offensive. The Society tries to disclaim all responsibility, but surely it is the business of the Council to select as their representative somebody who possesses the manners of a gentleman, even if it is not possible to procure a man of intelligence."

During 1930 a book called "Some Modern Mediums," by Mr. Besterman, was published. It is a small book of 175 pages, and in the preface Mr. Besterman states that "some of the mediums are surveyed from personal knowledge and investigation, others from a careful study of the available evidence."

In his book he comments categorically upon only five mediums. Of these five there are three with whom he has never even sat, and he therefore has no "personal knowledge" of them. One of these three, Mrs. Piper, an American trance-medium, was not a physical medium, and since the sittings she held date back to 1884, she can

hardly be described as a "modern medium." Of the second, "Eva C.," a well-known French physical medium, Mr. Besterman, after referring to the records from 1902 to 1920, says: "I do not attempt to disguise my belief that the evidence shows the mediumship of 'Eva C.' to be fraudulent from beginning to end."

Of the third, "Margery" (Mrs. Crandon), he is uncertain of any aspect of phenomena attributed to her, and he states that "her mediumship is still far from reaching an adequate standard of evidence."

Mr. Besterman's book contains his personal experience with only two mediums, one of whom is practically unknown.

Of Frau Maria Silbert, with whom during his sittings he failed entirely to discover any evidence whatever of fraud, he states: "I found it impossible to resist the conclusion that the phenomena I had witnessed were fraudulently produced. . . . I felt bound to adopt the hypothesis of fraud."

The one remaining medium with whom he had personal experience was Mme. Kahl-Toukhholka. This "medium" is unknown to students of psychical research and the records of her mediumistic powers are, apparently, non-existent. She is a lady of Russian origin, living in Paris. Mr. Besterman described a few puny experiments with cards, etc., and although he appeared to be pleased with the results he obtained, they were peculiarly futile so far as scientific psychical research is concerned.

Mr. Stanley de Brath, a member of the S.P.R., severely examines Mr. Besterman's attitude. Referring to him he says: "Such criticism derives its whole importance from the position of the writer, who is editor and librarian of the S.P.R. It stands on a different footing from the allegations of any private individual. It is therefore from that standpoint that we shall deal with it, and face the distasteful task of opposition. It will not enhance the reputation of the writer as a careful and unbiassed critic, as the editor of the S.P.R. should be."

He regards Mr. Besterman's writings as the "hasty impressions of a young man who presents his suspicions as universal fact." He goes on to say that "we should have been glad not to have mentioned Mr. Besterman at all, but simply to have disproved his statements; but that would have been to take up the contemptible position of being 'willing to wound, but yet afraid to strike.'

We can assure Mr. Besterman that these pages are not written with any hope of inducing him to modify his views. They are written because the utterances of the editor of the S.P.R. inevitably react on the Society which has appointed him, and whose matured opinion he is naturally held to represent."

Mr. Stanley de Brath is generous in his reference to the importance of the position of editor of the S.P.R. It may be asked does such importance exist? The editorship of a small intermittently published journal is not usually considered important. Mr. Besterman was, I know, recently a member of the young P.E.N., an association for budding writers. That, so far as is known, is the extent of his claim to fame.

It is palpable to any student of psychical research that Mr. Besterman, either because of explicit official orders, or personal antipathy, has shown himself to be definitely opposed to the acceptance of any form of supernormal phenomena. Despite his abysmal lack of experience he advances the hypothetical theory of fraud as an explanation for every recorded manifestation. A paper was delivered by him at Athens, which was later published by the S.P.R. (December, 1930) in "Transactions of the Fourth International Congress at Athens." This paper is pretentiously headed: "A Critical Estimate of the Present Status of Psychical Research," and in it Mr. Besterman derides practically every physical medium, past and present. D. D. Home, Usapia Paladina, the Schneider Bros.—all of these, according to Mr. Besterman, are frauds, but he fails to advance the proofs. There is, according to Mr. Besterman, "not one conclusive instance of supernormal phenomena," and having discarded all physical phenomena he pronounces that "survival seems to him to remain a philosophical problem not susceptible to scientific proof." He acknowledges this quite bluntly, for in a printed lecture he says: "*Practically all physical phenomena are faked by the medium,*" and with a carelessness which, considering the position he at present occupies, is almost inconceivable, he criticizes the works of the foremost researchers of the day in his reviews.

In regard to one particular review, which Doyle referred to in his letter of resignation, Mr. Besterman had the temerity to write: "I opened the book at random," and then, in one of the most damning statements ever published by a responsible officer of the S.P.R.

he wrote: "To put forward with such dogmatic claims of infallibility as Signor Bozzano's, is to bring our subject into contempt and disrepute." No sound literary reviewer, and no careful student, ever "opens a book at random," and after such a statement it is necessary to ask Mr. Besterman what exactly he means by "our subject."

Mr. Besterman has the impudence to deride the valuable work of Professor Ernesto Bozzano, a researcher of International repute, and to say of him: "Bozzano's reports do not in themselves merit serious attention on evidential grounds. They show an almost complete lack of understanding of what constitutes good evidence and adequate recording of mediumistic sittings," and with an arrogance, which would be merely laughable but for the fact of his official position, he dismisses Professor Charles Richet, Dr. Geley, Baron von Schrenck-Notzing, Mme. Bisson and Dr. Crandon as inefficient investigators. He does not believe in physical supernormal phenomena, and he does not believe that "survival is acceptable to scientific proof." Why then does he desire to continue to occupy his recent appointment to the position of editor of the S.P.R.? If he has determined that such phenomena do not exist, then it is obvious that he can only consider it a sheer waste of his time to continue further research.

But far more serious than the waste of Mr. Besterman's time, is the hampering and obstruction of research. He and his associates would seem to have "cornered" the S.P.R. and to have resolved to mould it according to their personal whims.

One of the regular contributors to the Journal of the S.P.R. is Count Perovsky-Petrovo-Solovovo. He reviews many of the foreign publications on psychical research, under the signature "P.P.S."

The views and opinions of Count Perovsky-Petrovo-Solovovo are in accordance with the present controlling administration of the Society. They are invariably antagonistic and destructive. "P.P.S." ignores valuable and incontrovertible evidence and confines himself to a search for the vaguest and smallest points as a pretext to cast aspersions.

In the January issue (1930) of the Journal, he took the opportunity to make derogatory insinuations regarding myself (H.D.B.). The quotations he made from the "Zeitschrift fur Parapsychologie" were absolutely false, which I was able to prove. In the October (1930) issue

of the Journal there appeared a letter of Count Perovsky-Petrovo-Solovovo, which contained a reference to Mrs. Bradley, which, had it appeared in the public Press, would have resulted in an immediate action for libel. His letter was so worded that it contained a veiled imputation that Mrs. Bradley had acted fraudulently at a sitting by having simulated a certain phenomenon. I immediately wrote to the editor of the Journal, regarding this libel, and also a further letter, giving the facts. This letter was published in the December (1930) issue of the Journal. The actual incident was trivial, and had no bearing whatever on any phenomenon. It is only necessary, therefore, to repeat the last paragraph of my letter: "What is of far greater moment is the veiled manner in which such a triviality is seized upon by Count Perovsky-Petrovo-Solovovo, and published in the Journal of the S.P.R. without reference to details and facts, in a manner calculated to mislead the members of the Society."

In the editorial comments of the Journal it was stated: "The Journal is printed for private circulation only, and the responsibility for all communications printed by the Society rests entirely with their authors." This is their usual excuse. It is a shelter under which the Journal feels itself at liberty to print dangerous assertions without fear of a public action. But I am informed that in law it is no excuse whatever. The Society "published" the libel, and they and their printers were equally liable.

In regard to this incident it is only fair to Count Perovsky-Petrovo-Solovovo to state that he subsequently apologized, and his apology was published in the Journal, December (1930) issue, a fact which makes the reckless publication of the original libel the more reprehensible.

Towards the end of 1930, "The Transactions of the Fourth International Congress for Psychical Research, Athens, 1930," was published in England by the London S.P.R. It is a 7s. 6d. book, containing the various papers delivered at the Congress held at Athens; some of the papers are printed in English, some in French, and some in German. The volume is edited by Mr. Theodore Besterman, the paid servant of the Society, and, as such, responsible to the members of the Society, and on page 3 there appears the usual S.P.R. futile sheltering statement, saying: "The responsibility for

both the facts and the reasonings in the papers published in these Transactions rests entirely with their authors."

I am informed that comparatively few copies have as yet been sold in England.

In this book, printed in German, there is a paper delivered by Dr. Walther Kröner, under the heading: "Der Kampf um Valiantine."

It is probable that only a small section of the members of the S.P.R. purchased this book, and only those who can read German will have been able to study this article. The number of English readers may therefore be negligible.

The officials of the S.P.R. are—and were—well acquainted with all the facts, as, prior to the Athens Congress, they had received a copy of "Die Sitzungen mit Valiantine," published by Oswald Mutze, Leipzig, 1930. *They must therefore have known of the damning indictment of Dr. Walther Kröner, in which his motives are clearly exposed in the statement made by his secretary, Maria Baader. Her statement is definite and unanswerable.*

Dr. Kröner is of the same type of pseudo-psychical researcher in Germany as Mr. Theodore Besterman is in England, and Count Perovsky-Petrovo-Solovovo is in Brussels. It should also be noted that none of these is experienced in psychic research nor has any one of them succeeded in acquiring any knowledge whatever of psychics that may be accounted of any value.

Of the series of sittings held in Berlin, Dr. Kröner was present at only three. It was, and is, evident that from the outset he had but one motive, and this is proved uncontestedly by the statement of Fräulein Maria Baader. The facts were, therefore, known to the officials of the S.P.R., since they were published in "Die Sitzungen mit Valiantine."

Dr. Kröner's paper, delivered at Athens, was manufactured by him entirely upon prejudiced theory and a desire for self-advertisement. It is all assumption, *without one iota of evidence*, and based upon only three actual personal experiences, all of which were comparatively negative.

His paper at Athens has been discredited by practically all the German students as an illogical and incompetent attempt to allege fraud by evolving theories.

I refer to this paper here only because the S.P.R. has seen fit to publish it in England.

A suggestion was put forward by Mr. W. H. Salter at Athens. It was as follows:

"An International Committee (of five) of the Societies for Psychical Research should report as regards all mediums producing 'controllable phenomena,' whether in fact they give reasonable facilities for investigation to all serious students. . . . The Committee would formulate standard control conditions, and also draw up a list of mediums to whom free access was possible."

In regard to Mr. Salter's suggestion, the observations made by Sir Oliver Lodge at Athens may be quoted:

"My view is that no record of any experiment can be made watertight and free from suspicion, if lurking grounds for suspicion exist in a critic's mind. . . . Elaborate precautions are desirable, but they are no real safeguard, nor any guarantee of good observation. Too much faith may be put in mechanical control; indeed, the more complicated it is, the more does it occupy the attention of the observer, which ought to be concentrated in other directions. If the mechanism is controlled by assistants, doubts about confederacy inevitably arise. . . .

"Indeed, if I were a conjurer or fraudulent performer, anxious to deceive a man of science, I should like him to have as much apparatus to attend to as possible, for then there would be no need for me to take trouble to distract his attention. Sufficient distraction would be automatically supplied. . . . Hence apparatus may favour fraud instead of preventing it, and at the same time may have a deleterious effect on genuine phenomena.

"The contention, now frequently and plausibly made, that no observation is worth anything except under the most stringent conditions, is neither practicable nor wise in all cases. Conditions effective in one direction may be defeated by deficiency in another; we cannot always tell beforehand what precise phenomenon is going to be produced. Precautions taken against telekinesis are ineffective against an apport, and vice versa. Moreover, it is always possible for an outsider, reading the record in which something incredible has seemed to happen, to assume that some precaution was after all neglected, and that if he had been there, things would have been different.

"Nothing is likely to carry real conviction except the cumulative effect of first-hand experience, of various kinds, under a great variety of circumstances. I would

rather myself concentrate on ascertaining the laws of a given kind of phenomenon, feeling sure that among all the repetitions necessary to that end, any fraudulent procedure must sooner or later leap to the light. It does not follow that in any specific case fraud has actually been used, merely because some loophole for its occurrence is afterwards thought of. There should be evidence that it *actually* occurred, and not merely a suspicion of its *possible* occurrence, before anyone is denounced. . . . Neither complete control nor complete observation is easy—perhaps not even possible, hence it may be said that in general no single experiment can be treated as conclusive. The fact that, in spite of abundant testimony, the world is not yet convinced is sufficient proof of that."

I advise Dr. Kröner, and others of his type, to study the sane and experienced views expressed by Sir Oliver Lodge.

. . . . .  
It is interesting to view the present position of the S.P.R. The "permanent officials" appear to dictate the policy of the Society. So far as any actual or progressive work in psychical research is concerned, the present administration is farcical. Its policy is entirely destructive, and the door of its séance room is definitely closed against experimentation. At the moment the Society is moribund.

It is illuminating to observe the objects of the Society as set forth in the printed rules of the S.P.R. I quote the chief of those objects:

" 1. (b) To investigate the phenomenon, commonly known as psychical or spiritualistic.

" 2. (c) To employ persons to make investigations and to pay for their service.

" 3. (d) and (g) To purchase books—form and maintain a library, etc. . . . to add thereto.

" 4. (e) To aid students and inquirers in their researches.

" 5. The income and property of the Society shall be applied solely towards promotion of the objects of the Society."

The objects of the Society and their fulfilment should be analysed in regard to their relation to the present administration.

1. So far as the investigation of phenomena is con-

cerned, Mr. Besterman has publicly stated that "Survival as such is not studied by the S.P.R."

2. This object has been faithfully and financially adhered to by the engagement of Mr. Besterman, but whether the object is fulfilled by this solitary engagement is another matter.

3. This object has most certainly *not* been adhered to. A valuable and unique collection of psychic books was offered as a gift to the Society by Mr. Harry Price and refused on the plea of "lack of accommodation."

4. It may satirically be asked precisely how and in what way the S.P.R. is aiding students and inquirers in their researches?

5. In what manner has the income and property of the Society been applied to the objects of the Society?

According to their Annual Report for the year 1930 the S.P.R. have "during the year visited four houses in London and one in Leicester for the purpose of investigating alleged apparitions and noises." It is pleasant to read that no reason was found to suppose that any supernormal causes were at work, and one can only admire the energy expended on such intensive and highly valuable investigation. One hopes that the outings were pleasant—and inexpensive. The mention of such absurdities as the result of a whole year's research work in psychical phenomena appears ludicrous.

A year ago at the Annual General Meeting the report showed that *no* practical research work had been undertaken during the preceding year. To the credit of Mr. Salter may be placed the statement he then made: "Some of our members probably do not realize the amount of work we have done in recent years in investigating Poltergeists and the like. The results are not often printed in full, partly because on investigation most of the cases are explicable by normal causes."

The truth is that during the last few years the Society, under the control of the present officials, has degenerated to such an extent that it is merely atavistic. It continues, like an elderly Victorian lady, to discuss apparitions, eerie noises, and Poltergeists; all of which represent the most insignificant and primitive forms of phenomena. To represent such infantile activities as modern psychical research is pathetic.

It is more than time that out-of-date and hide-bound obstructionists such as the present administrators of the S.P.R. should be swept aside, as doing positive harm to

the cause they are supposed to promote. Who are these men, who, having achieved nothing, venture to assert themselves as authorities upon the subject? Who is Dr. Kröner? Who is Mr. Theodore Besterman? One does not find their names in any of the established books of reference, comprising people of achievement and note in their various walks. Yet it is such types, the barnacles of the Society, who remain clinging to it, in a vain endeavour to swim to some haven of vicarious notoriety.

Doyle, the last time I saw him before he died, said to me: "The Society is evil."

He was dying, quite cheerfully, at the time, but he meant this seriously. I laughed when he said it, and replied, "It does not deserve to be called evil, it should be called mediæval."

What constructive programme has the present administration of the S.P.R. to offer its members in consideration for their annual subscriptions?

Their séance room has not been used for a year. Why not?

Have they *any* psychical mediums who will offer their services for experimentation?

These are questions of importance, because otherwise their research work ceases, and the objects of the Society remain unfulfilled.

In this connection it is necessary to regard the financial condition of the Society. The séance room was a gift. It is seldom used. The Fourth Carnegie Trust Grant has now ended in its fourth year.

The financial position of the S.P.R. is a matter which merits explanation. Its revenue amounts to nearly £3,000 a year. (The actual figures for 1930 were £2,957 3s. 10d.) At the last Annual General Meeting the treasurer, Mr. W. H. Salter, said: "The Society's ordinary income, mainly derived from investments and subscriptions, is not now, and never has been, much more than enough to pay for such expenses as rent, salaries, printing, postage, etc. The surplus available for research has always been small, and the Society has had to depend mainly only on members carrying on research at their own expense or on donations made specially for research."

Why is this?

Members of the Society pay their subscriptions for research work, which is one of the primary objects of

this Society. There is no object printed in the rules of the Society claiming that the bulk of the income is intended to pay for salaries, printing and postage.

Is the revenue derived from members to be subscribed for the printing of Mr. Theodore Besterman's banalities? Are they consulted before expenses of this nature are incurred?

Are the Society's funds to be exhausted on the payment of officials—leaving no surplus available for the expenses of investigating mediums? If so, the sooner it changes its name to the Psychical Benevolent Association the better.

The latest Annual Report contains a badly camouflaged statement. It is averred that only six members and one associate resigned on account of agreement with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. This statement in no way coincides with the large number of letters from members which Doyle received, and which I have personally read. The majority stated that, having paid their subscriptions, they were resigning at the end of the year. The Society actually received *eighty-four resignations* between January 1, 1930, and January 1, 1931.

This represents a serious loss in membership.

Actually it means that over 11 per cent. of the members have resigned during the last year, and I know personally of many more resignations which are pending, and will take place if the present state of affairs continues. Hence it is inevitable that the revenue of the Society for 1931 will be very considerably decreased. This persistent decrease in the membership of the S.P.R. is a significant and ominous sign.

I am a member of several Societies in England, and those with nominal subscriptions, despite the "general economic depression" (a reason which the S.P.R. weakly offers as an excuse), so far from decreasing, are regularly increasing in membership. The reason is simply and solely that their organizations are progressively and amicably run. I know of no intellectual Society in England which has experienced such a state of chaos, dissension, and bitterness as that which now exists among the members of the S.P.R. It has been brought to this condition during the last one or two years, because of the persistent stultification by a small coterie of the objects for which the Society was originally founded—a stultification amounting at times to a complete obstruction.

If the attitude of the present administrators of the S.P.R. is simply that genuine supernormal physical phenomena do not exist, and if that view is supported by the Council, then the time has arrived for the Society to close down, for in such a case its objects are exhausted; any expenditure on it is a waste of money; its publications are valueless, and its authority gone.

In my work I have found of recent years that my membership of the S.P.R., so far from being of any value to me, has been detrimental and obstructive, and has wasted a considerable amount of my time upon retrogressive and unpleasant controversy. As a body for practical psychical research the S.P.R. has ceased to function, and its existence now belies the purpose for which it was formed.

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# BOOK IV

FRAUD. THE AMERICAN INVASION, 1931

## CHAPTER I

### THE BAYLIS EXPOSURE

*Innumerable complaints—I arrange for a sitting—My report—Obvious fraud—Ridiculous proceedings—Exposure—A scene—Publication of my report—Correspondence—The Baylises disappear.*

FOR several months prior to the date upon which I held my first and only sitting with Mrs. Baylis, an alleged materializing medium of English origin, I had received many complaints as to her methods and results, and also personal calls from researchers anxious for me to investigate this medium's procedure.

At that time I was not particularly desirous of doing so, but eventually, in response to these requests, I arranged for a sitting.

The Baylises, husband and wife, were under engagement to the London Spiritualist Alliance Ltd., and also to the Marylebone Spiritualist Association Ltd. The result of my investigation was that I regarded their methods as so unsatisfactory that I was strongly of opinion that the public should be warned against them. For this purpose the best organ to reach the members of the Marylebone Association and the London Spiritual Alliance was the psychic weekly paper *Light*. I therefore addressed a short formal letter to the editor of this paper, in which I stated that, in my opinion, and in the opinion of the sitters, whose signatures were appended to my letter, the conditions under which the medium and her husband sat were of an entirely unsatisfactory character, and open to very grave suspicion. In this letter I enclosed a full and detailed report of my investigations, and a further copy was sent to the secretary of the London Spiritualist Alliance. In addition to this formal letter for publication, I wrote the following personal letter to the editor of *Light*:

"November 11, 1927.

"DEAR MR. GOW,

"I am enclosing herewith the detailed report of the Baylis sitting. I am also enclosing a formal letter to you, as editor, for publication. Now, you must either publish one or the other. If you publish the report you do not publish the letter, and if you publish the letter, do not publish the report. I am leaving the decision to you, and perhaps you would give me a ring on either Monday or Tuesday next.

"In my opinion, and in the opinion of the other sitters, the whole of the proceedings were fraudulent. The position, however, is this. Mrs. Gavin is a very kind-hearted woman and she has pleaded with me for the Baylises. She says that she thinks, upon some occasions, they do not get mental evidence. This would not influence me, but her plea that they have four young children dependent upon them does appeal to my humanitarian side. Mrs. Gavin assures me that the Baylises have had such a lesson that she does not think they will attempt to commit fraud again. But I am by no means sure of this. I have found in life that men who have robbed me once and have been forgiven, have taken the first opportunity to rob me of a bit more the second time.

"I detest such incidents as these and I can assure you it is no pleasure for me to be bothered to the extent I have been in this matter. I know you agree with me that the whole of this movement should be clean from fraudulent behaviour.

"You have a sound and critical mind, so I am leaving the decision entirely in your hands.

"Yours sincerely,

"(Signed) H. DENNIS BRADLEY."

I considered it imperative that a warning should be published in the psychic papers. Mr. Gow agreed with me, and decided to publish the following report of my experience.

*Report on Sitting held with Mr. and Mrs. Batten Baylis,  
at Maida Vale, on Thursday evening, October 27,  
1927, at about 8 p.m.*

I had received several complaints from various and independent sources of the suspicious character of the

"materializing" séances held in complete darkness by Mr. and Mrs. Batten Baylis, at their flat in Maida Vale. Detailed verbal accounts were given to me by intelligent sitters of standing, who had kept careful observation of what took place, and they informed me that they were of the opinion that the proceedings were often fraudulent.

It was in response to these private requests that I agreed to investigate the mediumship personally.

I regarded it as essential for me and for the investigators who accompanied me that I and they should remain anonymous. I therefore requested Mrs. Gavin, a friend of mine, upon whom I could rely, to book a sitting with Mrs. Baylis, in her name.

The Baylises séance engagements were booked up for some considerable time ahead, and it was necessary to book this appointment over *four weeks in advance*. The séance was held at their flat, where we arrived at about 7.50 p.m. In addition to Mrs. Gavin I had brought with me my wife, Mr. Noel Jaquin, and Mr. J. W. Miller.

Mrs. Gavin knew the "medium," but none of the others were introduced by name. I am under the impression that it is quite possible that Mr. Baylis did not recognize me, but Mrs. Baylis, on meeting me, remarked that she thought she had seen me before.

Before we went into the séance room, Mr. Baylis addressed us at some length upon the subject of "materializations," and "the direct voice" phenomena. His references to "voice" phenomena struck me as being peculiarly stereotyped, and, to a considerable extent, ignorant and unintelligent.

His remarks were repeated in plausible, parrot-like fashion, but they conveyed to me no personal knowledge whatever of the subject. He said that we might, or might not, get "voices," but he implied that we should most probably get "materialized hands."

He particularly impressed upon us that it was essential that we should sit quietly with our hands upon our knees, and in no circumstances should we make any movement while "phenomena" were taking place, because if we failed strictly to observe this rule it would affect the medium. He emphasized this point unduly, and stressed it on more than one occasion.

We were then conducted to the séance room, the size of which might be estimated roughly at about 20 feet by 14 feet. Although the room was a small one, some-

what to our surprise the seven chairs for the sitters were placed together in the left-hand corner of the room from entering the door. The room was practically devoid of furniture, with the exception of a large wardrobe at the further end, which covered a considerable part of the exterior window. Mrs. Baylis took her seat in a chair backing on to the door-side wall. Immediately above her head, and some 5 feet or so from the ground, there was an aperture in the wall, roughly about 3 feet by 2 feet, which was covered with some carpet-like material. The information was volunteered that this opening had been a window, and that it had been found necessary to cover it up in order to exclude all light from the room. It should be mentioned that during the sitting on the night in question the aperture was not used in any way. At the same time it certainly struck all the sitters that it was the most unusual place for a window which must, of necessity, be an interior window, and also that it was extremely unwise for an alleged "voice" medium to choose to sit immediately beneath it.

On assembling in the room, Mr. Baylis informed us that the medium would indicate where each of us was to sit. He then left the room for about two minutes or so, and reappeared with two small white screens, roughly 6 inches square, upon which he said there might appear later "materialized faces."

In placing us, Mrs. Baylis reserved the chair next to her—immediately on her left—for Mr. Baylis. The circle was then placed from left to right in the following order: Mrs. Batten Baylis, Mr. Batten Baylis, Mr. J. W. Miller, Mrs. Bradley, H. Dennis Bradley, Mrs. Gavin, Mr. Noel Jaquin. The last named sitting on Mrs. Baylis's right.

Slightly behind Mrs. Baylis and immediately on her right, there was a small table upon which were placed the two small screens. There was also placed upon this table an aluminium or tin trumpet. This was handed round, and as the séance was about to commence, I, quite naturally and instinctively, placed the trumpet in the centre of the circle. To my astonishment the trumpet was at once picked up by Mrs. Baylis and placed upon the table, immediately beside her. Mr. Baylis informed us that their "spirits" only occasionally used the trumpet as they generally preferred to speak independently. It must be clearly understood, however, that the two screens and the trumpet were kept *outside* the

circle, and within a few inches of Mrs. Baylis. She was in no way controlled, but, strangely enough, Mr. Baylis asked Mr. Miller to place his right hand upon his (Mr. Baylis's) hands. As the lights were turned off all the sitters sat with their hands upon their knees as instructed.

The sitting was held in complete darkness, with no luminosity whatever on the trumpet.

The chairs were placed so close together that the dimensions of the circle were reduced to an absolute minimum; so close indeed that anyone present could, by leaning forward, easily touch any of the other sitters. The sitters were all experienced researchers, and between Mr. Noel Jaquin, Mr. Miller and myself we had previously arranged a verbal code by which we could notify to each other in the dark if anything fraudulent had been detected. This was arranged in such a manner that it could convey nothing to the medium nor to her husband, and would not in any way interfere with the continuance of the sitting. Neither Mrs. Bradley nor Mrs. Gavin were informed of the verbal code arranged.

No gramophone or other music was played, but after Mr. Baylis had recited an ill-expressed prayer he kept up a continual parrot-like, illiterate chatter during the next ten minutes or so.

Then Mr. Miller announced that he was being touched on the hand. In accordance with the usual method, Mr. Miller asked whether he was being touched by a friend or a relative, and then made the request: "If it is a relative, would you please touch me on the left hand." This was quite a simple request to make. Mr. Miller, however, had taken the precaution of removing his left hand from his knee and placing it just 6 inches away from his knee. Mr. Miller was then touched *on his knee*, although his hand was not 6 inches away.

Mrs. Bradley, who was seated next to Mr. Miller, then announced that she had been touched on the hand. As I was sitting next to her I anticipated that I should be the next person to be touched, and I also anticipated exactly *where* I should be touched, so I turned my right hand *palm upwards* from my knee. There came slowly into it the warm flesh-and-bone fingers of the hand of Mrs. Baylis. I clasped them, and then allowed them to be pulled away from me back into the direction in which she was sitting.

I must emphasize at this point that, although I knew that fraud was being perpetrated, I did not wish to disturb the "séance," because I desired to observe the full extent of the so-called phenomena. It must here be mentioned that Mr. Noel Jaquin, who was sitting on the right of Mrs. Baylis, detected, at the moment Mr. Miller was first touched, a slight rustle, such as would be made by the movement of the body against female garments. It was the faint rustle of loose clothing. After this, Mr. Jaquin carefully placed his left hand fingers very lightly on, and to the right of the "medium's" knee—her right knee. During the times that the sitters were being touched Mr. Jaquin detected the slight tensing of the muscles, made as the body was moving forward without leaving the chair.

After I had grasped the hand of Mrs. Baylis she evidently gave the signal to Mr. Baylis, because his manner and chatter immediately changed its character. He commenced to talk of the bad conditions of the weather, and to say that it appeared very difficult to get phenomena through. Then he (Mr. Baylis) said in rather troubled tones: "George says that the ectoplasmic hands must not be touched." Why did Mr. Baylis, who is not the medium, make this remark? I had made no mention whatever by my conversation of my discovery. At the same time, I passed the signal to my friends of what I had detected. It is just possible that Mr. and Mrs. Baylis may have imagined that the grasp of the hand was inadvertent, because after a wait of five or six minutes others of the sitters were again touched, but I was left severely alone.

Just after this, Mrs. Gavin announced that she had been touched on her hand. Mr. Jaquin states that he was touched first on his right hand, and then, quickly removing his left hand from the close proximity of the medium's knee, he was tapped on that hand. A little later, on feeling a touch on his right hand, he quickly and carefully moved his left hand round in the dark, and there felt the human wrist of the "spirit hand" which was touching him. Directly he touched the wrist the hand was drawn back towards Mrs. Baylis. A minute or so after this Mr. Baylis announced that the sitting must be closed.

Mr. Miller told us that directly after the code signals had been given that fraud had been detected, and from then until the end of the sitting, Mr. Baylis's hands

(which he was controlling) were trembling in an agitated manner. The reason for this may certainly be assumed that Mr. Baylis had received privately a signal from Mrs. Baylis that she feared that detection had been made.

Mrs. Baylis, who was supposed to be in a trance, did not speak throughout the whole of the time. Why then should Mr. Baylis, who was *not* the medium, announce that the sitting was to be closed?

After we had waited for some few seconds, Mrs. Baylis, speaking in a loud tone (obviously and unmistakably in her own voice, but announcing herself as "George") said: "The sitting must close; someone has touched a materialized hand." Upon this statement being made I immediately disclosed my identity, and said that the hand which had touched me, and which I had clasped, was not a materialized hand, but that it was hers and that she knew it. I then requested that this foolery must cease at once, and that the lights should be turned on.

Mr. Baylis then appeared to be very frightened, and protested that if a light was struck his wife's life would be in danger. But *immediately after this he himself struck a light.*

Mrs. Baylis was then seen to be seated in a limp attitude on her chair. She was alleged by Mr. Baylis to be in a trance. Directly the lights were turned on I expressed very forcibly my opinion of the whole affair. Mr. Baylis could make no reply. I told him that Mrs. Baylis was *not* in a trance, and all he could say was that she must not be touched. In reply to my denunciation, all that Mr. Baylis could say was that it would be a great shock to his wife.

Within a minute or so Mrs. Gavin suggested that we should adjourn to another room and discuss the matter, which we all did. Mr. Baylis agreed to this, and left his wife alone in her supposed trance condition—*an absolutely ridiculous action if he thought the trance to be genuine.* Mrs. Baylis kept up her pose, and was apparently too frightened to say a solitary word.

On adjourning to another room, Mr. Baylis stood talking with us for quite a quarter of an hour, without making an attempt to see Mrs. Baylis. He was quite callous in deserting her in order to try and rescue himself.

Three of the sitters present at this sitting are well-

known sensitives, with a highly developed knowledge of the atmosphere in a séance room when genuine phenomena are taking place; neither Mr. Jaquin, my wife, nor myself experienced the faintest semblance of a psychic atmosphere during the proceedings.

All the sitters, except Mrs. Gavin, who, as introducer, naturally did not express an opinion, agreed that none of the manifestations were of a supernormal character.

Mr. J. W. Miller wrote a long detailed report in which he recorded the whole of the sitting as quite negative and open to the utmost suspicion. Mr. Noel Jaquin, in his report, said "the séance was fraudulent from beginning to end"; that also is my firm opinion. It is possible that Mrs. Baylis may have obtained phenomena upon some occasions, but I am only concerned with the sitting in which I took part. It is essential to say that the entire conditions imposed by Mr. and Mrs. Baylis upon the sitters were ridiculous. The sitting was held in pitch darkness, no luminous paint was used, and the chairs were placed as close as possible together, with the table, on which were placed the screens and the trumpet, immediately beside the medium and *outside the circle*. This is contrary to all regular procedure at séances for physical phenomena. If ectoplasmic forces are used they emanate *towards* the centre of the circle, *and not behind it*.

When mental communications are likely to be received no control is necessary, but for purely physical séances held in complete darkness, without any luminosity of instruments, some control of the medium is imperative, otherwise any phenomenon is open to suspicion.

The method of controlling the hands of Mr. Baylis was quite absurd. It amounted to this: it was *not* that the sitter was controlling Mr. Baylis, but that Mr. Baylis was *controlling the right side of the sitter*; consequently, as Mr. Baylis sat at Mrs. Baylis's left hand, over one-third of the circle was left completely open for her. Thus, according to the manner in which the Baylis's sittings were conducted, all the sitters were controlled by the injunctions imposed upon them of keeping their hands upon their knees and the medium was permitted absolute freedom.

It is necessary also to record that the fee charged by the Baylises was five guineas for a sitting. This was paid by Mrs. Gavin on my behalf *before* the sitting took place. It was, of course, returned afterwards upon my demand.

It is also necessary to record that Mrs. Baylis received five guineas for each of her sittings. As a rule, her circles comprised five persons at one guinea each. They were booked up enormously, and to obtain an appointment it was necessary for me to book up four weeks ahead.

I was informed that they were only able to hold three sittings a week. I have since learned, however, that they were regularly booked for Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday evenings. My sitting, however, was booked for a *Thursday* evening, and, when I arrived home at "Dorincourt" on this particular night, Mr. Denis Grinling (who had been dining with my son, and was spending the night there) told me that he had a sitting booked with Mrs. Baylis for the following day at 11 a.m. (This sitting was cancelled by Mr. Baylis on Mr. Grinling's arrival on the following morning.) Upon questioning Mr. Grinling, he told me that to get an appointment he had to book up five weeks before.

After the publication of this report in the psychic paper, *Light*, on November 26, 1927, for two months the columns of this paper were inundated with correspondence. Several of the correspondents endeavoured to support the Baylises, but the majority welcomed the public exposure. I received innumerable letters from people who had similar unsatisfactory experiences, and they thanked me for my action.

In consequence of this influx of correspondence, it became necessary for me to reply, and to analyse the statements of the various writers, which I did, and my rejoinder was published in *Light* on January 7, 1928, and was as follows:

" Presuming that the correspondence with reference to the Baylis case is now approaching its conclusion, I regard it as essential to deal briefly with a few of the points which have been raised. It is necessary to emphasize that the reason I agreed to investigate the character of the mediumship of Mr. and Mrs. Batten Baylis was that for several months I had received serious complaints of the suspicious nature of the proceedings on certain occasions, and deliberate assertions from careful observers that at times the proceedings were fraudulent. It is not my desire to seek unpleasant experiences, nor to have my name connected with affairs of this descrip-

tion, but in this case, on account of the repeated requests, I had no option. In these circumstances it was imperative for me to use certain tests, and had any genuine phenomena taken place I should have been only too happy to record them. Unfortunately, *no* genuine phenomena happened, and my report, published in the issue of November 26, is an accurate and scrupulously fair record of what took place.

"I have read very carefully the letters which have appeared in subsequent issues of *Light*, and whilst I am quite prepared to accept the testimony of those who have received what they consider to be genuine evidence, it must be clearly understood that such testimony cannot refute or affect the incidents which occurred on the occasion of my sitting.

"It is an indisputable fact that a medium may be genuine upon some occasions and fraudulent upon others, when the psychic powers are not functioning.

"Mr. George Craze, the president of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, states in his letter: 'The attack reflects much more discredit on its author than on the maligned sensitive or her husband.'

"If my action in publishing a faithful account of an unsatisfactory sitting is regarded as discreditable, then I certainly wish to disassociate myself entirely from any Spiritualist or Spiritualistic Society following such a narrow and secretive policy.

"With the exception of the letter of 'H.S.L.P.' which appeared on December 17, I am in no way impressed by the majority of the letters which have been published. There is, throughout, an unfortunate repetition of the 'touching of rings' and other articles prominently worn by the various sitters. I would point out to Mr. Alex. L. Dribbel that in psychical research if a 'voice' purporting to be that of a spirit describes its present happy state and said, 'If you only knew, old boy,' such a remark is not regarded as evidence. And also, that if an apparition appears, saying, 'Father' (which the sitter confesses he did not recognize, as his father was a much younger man), and 'George,' the control, says, 'Yes, sir, it was your father, only you did not recognize him,' such an absurd admission only rouses ridicule. It would have been more humorous had 'George' added: 'It's a wise child that knows its own father.'

"With regard to the points raised by Admiral Wilfred Henderson, I would inform him that it is *not* the usual

procedure in physical séances for the sitters to be requested to keep their hands upon their knees and not to move them. My statement that when the ectoplasmic forces are used they emanate towards the centre of the circle is *not* a misleading nor incorrect one. It is a correct assertion, derived from personal experiences extending over many years. The sittings with Valantine are *not* held in total darkness; any number of them have been held in full daylight.

"Admiral Henderson asks how Mrs. Baylis was able, in pitch blackness, to see where the knees of the various sitters were. There was no necessity for her to see; in a confined circle it is perfectly simple for anyone to work from left to right and touch the knees of all the sitters. I would personally guarantee to do it time after time and never make a mistake.

"When Mr. Miller, who was sitting on the left of Mr. and Mrs. Baylis, asked that his left *hand* should be touched, and then moved his left hand six inches away from his knee he was touched *on the knee*—an obviously simple procedure, but a very obvious error. Admiral Henderson asks why, when I grasped the fingers of Mrs. Baylis, did I let them go? The reason for not holding on to them was that by doing so the sitting would have been closed, and the subsequent discoveries, which were important, would not have been revealed.

"I do not understand Admiral Henderson's reference to the language used at the conclusion of the sitting. The language I use is, as a rule, good and fluent English, and is as expressive as the occasion demands.

"I have now dealt with the favourable letters in regard to the Baylises. Of those which have been unfavourable, it is necessary to refer to Mr. Royan Middleton's communication, in which he claims to have discovered Mrs. Baylis in deliberate fraud, discerning the features of Mrs. Baylis between the plaques and also feeling a solid warm and lifelike arm behind one of the plaques.

"Mr. James Oakes also records that at his third sitting the séance held was of such a mixed character that one of the sitters was disgusted, and he states that he 'was left with a strong impression that a fraud had been perpetrated.'

"It is useless for me to criticize Mr. Batten Baylis's letter. Mr. Baylis utterly fails to answer any of the accusations I made, and, in a foolish attempt at defence, diverts the issue by making untrue statements with

regard to Mrs. Gavin, which she has completely refuted in her letter which appeared on December 24.

" This represents a brief survey of what appeared in the columns of *Light* after the publication of my report. In addition, however, there is another very important side. I have already stated that, before I held my sitting with the Baylises, I had received many complaints. Since the publication of my report I have received many more. When fraud is discovered the average person is not anxious to have his name published in connection with such unpleasant disclosures. I consider it only right and just, however, to publish the contents of at least one of these letters.

" The following is a verbatim quotation:

" ' I sat next to the medium, and there was not six inches between our chairs. I saw quite clearly one face purporting to be three different people. The full face I could not see distinctly, but as it passed I got it in profile against the slate. (It was Mrs. Baylis's face.) The third time I was so certain that I felt out with my hand and passed it over the *empty chair where Mrs. Baylis had been.*<sup>1</sup> When I found out what had happened I became twice as observant. I noticed that Mr. Baylis's chatter was always loudest when I heard extra rustles and movements in the circle. He covered her getting up and sitting down very neatly, with lengthy explanations about the phenomena. In spite of all this, at the end I distinctly heard her sit down. She had on a silk dress, which rustled slightly with each movement of the trumpet. . . .

" ' All the " voices " came through from the same place, just in front of me where Mrs. Baylis was standing. I moved a hand slightly forward, and touched dress material just in front of me.'

" The above is an example of many of the letters which I have received.

" After my sitting with the Baylises, Mr. Noel Jaquin made to them what I consider to be one of the fairest offers possible. He suggested that, if they wished to prove that they could obtain genuine phenomena, they

<sup>1</sup> This was the most direct method of proving fraud. It may be recommended to the notice of Dr. Kröner of Berlin, who was " apparently " so inconceivably simple as not to think of this obvious test. As a researcher he must reproach himself.

should sit under their own conditions, *with their own sitters in their own room*; he himself would not be present, but he would apply a chemical test which would prove whether the touches were supernormal. The Baylises refused to accept this offer. I understand that they also refused to sit at the British College of Psychic Science under controlled conditions, or to allow the Honorary Director of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research to be present at one of their séances.

"In conclusion, may I point out that the Baylis case gave rise to far more important issues than the trivialities and petty deceptions which have appeared upon the surface.

"The curse of psychical research has been fraudulent mediums, and it is because of such inevitable and cancerous growths that the progress has hitherto been retarded. Until now the attitude of the world for and against spiritualism has tended towards extremes. On one side there exists the attitude of a great number of spiritualists, whose credulity is so pitiful as to bring ridicule upon a fundamental and progressive discovery, and, on the other side, there is a section of material scientists whose incredulity in face of the established facts is equally absurd. What it is necessary to attain between these two fanatical extremes is a logical balance. So far as I am concerned, in my studies and my research, I am as unlikely ever to agree with the extreme spiritualist as I am unlikely to agree with the extreme materialist. *When I discover fraud, wherever it may lie, I shall expose it just as fearlessly as I published the truth of supernormal phenomena when it was revealed to me."*

It is interesting to observe the aftermath of this exposure of the Baylises.

A few days after my investigation they disappeared. Had they been genuine mediums they would certainly not have done so. They had a lucrative engagement with the London Spiritualist Alliance, and a further lucrative engagement with the Marylebone Spiritualist Association.

The Marylebone Association appeared to be incensed at my exposure. The Association had booked these "mediums" for a long series of sittings, and possibly my exposure disturbed its future arrangements in regard to the séances which were being advertised.

It is, I think, essential to emphasize the fact that the Baylises *ran away*, and despite the backing of their supporters, *they never gave another séance*. They were frightened out of their lives. For a few days they bluffed, saying that they were prepared to give test séances, but they never gave one. They disappeared from their flat, and I was told later that they went back to domestic service, from which they had risen.

It is possible that the Baylises, or Mrs. Baylis, who posed as the medium, may at some time or other have had claims to mediumistic powers. If she had, they were of a very low order. From all the accounts I received of the séances held by Mrs. Baylis, even those of their most credulous supporters, the results were of such a low type that they could only be regarded as degrading to the intellect of the average man, and the observation of such results represented only a deplorable waste of time. *On the occasion I was present everything was fraudulent.*

It is necessary to consider what these people were earning by their fraudulent practices.

For one wretched séance of an hour or so I paid five guineas, which I demanded to be returned to me. I knew beforehand, and it was confirmed to me later, that the Baylises were working three and sometimes four séances a day. At a minimum charge of five guineas they would earn from £80 to £90 a week.

The London Spiritualist Alliance were guaranteeing certain sums for their services, and the Marylebone Spiritualist Association had also engaged them. After my exposure the London Spiritualist Alliance immediately cancelled their engagement, but the Marylebone Association was apparently incensed against me because I put an end to what I regarded as scandalous abuse of credulous people.

I am not aware how much money the Baylises saved during their fraudulent performances, which, it must be understood, were illegal, since they could have been prosecuted for obtaining money by false pretences, but I learned afterwards that Mr. Baylis was a horse fancier. Therefore, it is quite possible that the bookmakers benefited to as great an extent as the Baylises.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who was a good friend of mine, had, I think, two sittings with them. He was inclined to accept, from one of these, a point which he regarded as evidence. This referred to the touching of

a spade guinea on his watch chain. I mention this particularly because four years afterwards, in February, 1931, some months after his death, an indirect reference was made to this particular spade guinea.

Doyle was one of the kindest-hearted men I have ever met. He would never injure a fellow-creature, and if he found a spark of genuineness in a medium I think he was always inclined to overlook the lapses. With all his kindness and his fine human sympathy, Doyle was a very astute man. He knew more of psychical research than the bulk of the Psychical Research Societies put together. The majority of these have no knowledge.

Doyle and I often disagreed over technical points, but were always in agreement on essentials. Doyle, in his attitude, would excuse and sympathize, whilst I, in my studies, have always felt impelled to analyse and justify. Nevertheless, Doyle once said that "professional mediums are the curse of this study." In this I entirely agree with him.

Since the investigation I made of the alleged materializing mediumship of Mrs. Baylis, she and her husband have never been heard of again. Had they possessed genuine mediumistic powers they would inevitably have rehabilitated themselves, as every opportunity was offered them. They just faded away; perhaps they have since de-materialized.

## CHAPTER II

### " MATERIALIZATIONS " AT THE NATIONAL LABORATORY

*The mediumship of Mr. L'Estrange—Mr. Harry Price prepares the séance room—The medium searched—A light trance—A deeper trance—Music-hall Scotch—Unutterable drivel—The curtain moves—Throwing old clothes about—The chair moves—A ludicrous and somewhat costly affair.*

*Sitting held at the National Laboratory of Psychic Science (13b Roland Gardens, W.) on Wednesday, March 11, 1931*

THE sitting was held under the mediumship of Mr. L'Estrange, who is alleged to be a materialization medium.

In addition to the medium, there were ten sitters of mixed sexes present, four of whom were personal supporters of the medium, and the remaining six sitters were Mr. Harry Price (Honorary Director of the National Laboratory) and five friends whom he had invited, who included Mr. Charles Sykes and myself.

Mr. Harry Price prepared the séance room in his laboratory. A chair was placed in the corner of the room for the medium, and curtains were drawn across this corner. On the edge of these curtains were luminous stripes, running from the top to the bottom; one on the right and one on the left.

Before the sitting took place the medium was searched, and partially stripped in the presence of the men sitters.

Mr. Price bound both the wrists of the medium to the chair with adhesive tape. Both ankles were tied tightly to the legs of the chair. Blue marks in the shape of a cross were placed from the wrists to the top part of the flesh on the hand.

I was asked to examine the binding of the medium, which was certainly quite satisfactory.

Outside the circle was Mr. Price's lady secretary. All the incidents which took place were recorded and dictated by her into a dictaphone.

The medium's sponsor—whose name I do not remember—was sitting on the medium's right, close to the curtains. Mr. Price was on the left of the medium, next to the curtain. The medium's sponsor's left hand was therefore free; also Mr. Price's right hand was free. All the sitters held hands throughout the sitting.

The lights were turned out. There was complete darkness, with the exception of a very small red electric spark, which flashed each second. It functioned extremely well, and flashed for over ten thousand seconds, when, personally, I got very tired of it.

After some minutes the medium made a few strange noises, such as might be emitted by a person with weak lungs, or one suffering from an attack of colic. It was then announced by the medium's sponsor that the medium was passing into a light trance. Later, a few somewhat incoherent and unintelligible words, which conveyed nothing, were uttered. After this, the medium gave a heavy sigh, and then the medium's sponsor announced that the medium was “now passing into a deeper trance.” After a while the medium spoke again; he spoke in his own tones, but with a faint suggestion of music-hall Scotch. His friends at once acclaimed the arrival of “James something or other,” who was his Scotch control.

All the remarks made by this so-called Scotch control were the most unutterable drivel that I have ever listened to. After a considerable period the luminous paint on the curtain was recorded to be moving; first on the left side, and later on the right side. This continued at odd intervals for an hour and a half, each movement being recorded, and dictated into the dictaphone. After the first one or two movements it moved slightly more firmly, as if pushed or shaken. It was then recorded by Mr. Price, and the medium's sponsor, that the “curtain moved well.” “James” announced that they were trying hard. No materialization of any kind, however, appeared.

I had observed very carefully the preliminary arrangements, and after one and a half hours of stupid, and, to my mind, degrading nonsense, I asked the circle how long the medium's séances usually lasted. The medium's sponsor said, “Sometimes they last four hours.” I then said that I had no intention of spending four hours there. The lady on my left—one of the medium's friends—said: “Oh, no, they don't last so long as that,” but the

medium's sponsor said: "Oh, yes, they do. Sometimes we have commenced sitting at 8.30 and it has been nearly 1 o'clock before we have got away." I then asked whether I should break the circle, as I certainly had no intention of sitting for such a period. Some of the circle appeared to welcome this suggestion. I announced, however, that as I had devoted an entire evening to the appointment I should like the opportunity of observing the conditions after the séance was finished, and that I would sit on for another half-hour.

After a while a movement was heard inside from behind the curtains, and one of the medium's friends said: "I think they are taking off his coat." I inquired whether this was a part of the medium's "phenomena," and the lady replied: "Yes, they take off his coat and it is thrown out from behind the curtains straight in front of him. It usually hits a sitter who is opposite him."

As I was seated exactly facing the "medium" in the circle, I did not entirely relish the idea of part of his worn clothing being thrown at me, even though his friends were apparently in the habit of accepting such an illustration as an example of high spirituality. However, nothing of the kind happened—happily.

When the control "James" again started to murmur I asked him whether the séance was likely to last half an hour, one hour, or two hours. He said that he did not know, but after waiting for another quarter of an hour, with movements of the curtain at certain intervals, the "Scotch control" said that the conditions were all right, and the sitters quite good, but the medium was not very fit. A little later the medium made further strange noises, and his sponsor said that he was coming out of his trance.

The séance finished, and the lights were turned on. I then examined the curtains and the position of the medium. His chair had been shifted to the right, quite close to the curtain, which was a simple matter. The devised control by Mr. Price was utterly inadequate. It was perfectly simple for the medium to move the chair, and also to move the curtains—this could easily be done by bending the head, or, indeed, by a foot or a hand, without the slightest difficulty. The movements of the curtain which I observed were ludicrous.

I was told afterwards by the medium's sponsor that full-length forms materialized—some taller than me.

I asked him how they appeared, and he said that the luminous disc, which had been previously placed beside the medium, often moved round the circle, down and up, so that the materialized forms could be seen from the feet upwards.

In answer to a question asked by a lady, the medium's sponsor said that only one part of the anatomy was reflected at a time.

In my opinion, nothing of any supernormal character occurred whatever. But apart from this I consider that it is degrading for people of intelligence to be asked to sit for hours at a time to observe such rubbish. Even if one accepted the supernormal in such cases, then the entities as illustrated by the conversation which came through the medium's mouth were of such a low type of intelligence and character that they could only be accepted as representing the lowest possible class of mind, which it would be a waste of time to interrogate.

For the miserable entertainment offered to us, the “medium” received the sum of £7 7s., of which I was asked to contribute £2 6s. 8d. for myself and Mr. Sykes, that being my proportion of the payment. The medium's chorus were, of course, admitted free.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FLIGHT OF THE HAMILTONS

*Some reflections—Advice to bandits—Mr. Sproull introduces the Hamiltons—Financial arrangements—Negotiations—"Warmest greetings"—A misrepresentation—Terms agreed—An attempt to "raise" me—A disingenuous appeal—The Hamiltons arrive—My impressions—The one and only sitting—A nervous medium—"Nothing doing"—An attempt to alter the order of seating—Complaints as to the search—Absolute drivel—Refused to sit—An absurd letter—The amazing recovery of Mrs. Hamilton—"Test Points"—The Hamiltons bolt—Getting the money back—The sponsor repudiates liability—"Camp Chesterfield"—A gallery of beauty—What the Hamiltons got away with—What they missed.*

#### I

SOME Chinese bandits, laudably anxious for innocent pleasures, having captured an American missionary, recently announced their desire to exchange him for more amusing articles, in particular specifying gramophone records, tennis rackets, fountain-pens and footballs.

Had I been consulted, I should have suggested that far more amusement could be got by exchanging the missionary for a certain type of American medium.

A very necessary part of the ordinary man's mental equipment is a sense of humour; it is frequently the salvation of the psychic researcher. If he does not possess it, he will at times yearn to commit assault and battery—if not actual murder—as he reflects on wasted time, wasted money and cheap impertinences. To say nothing of the fact that it is flattering to no man's self-esteem to be taken for what, in race-course parlance, is styled a "mug."

We are all taken for "mugs" at times—even Cabinet Ministers—and the position has its compensation when one is enabled to prove that the real "mug" is the person who makes the assumption.

In this chapter I propose to give a short account of such a case, and here let me say that in my experience these instances, in psychic as in other paths of life, are frequently associated with devious finance.

In October, 1930, an announcement that Mrs. Hamilton, the American materializing medium, was

visiting England, appeared in *The Two Worlds*, a weekly journal devoted to spiritualism. The announcement took the form of a letter, which described the powers of the medium in highly laudatory terms, and was written by a Mr. R. Sproull, Chartered Accountant, of 26 Budge Row, London, E.C.4.

If the actual powers of the medium bore any relation to those claimed for her by Mr. Sproull, they seemed to me to be well worth examining, so I wrote to that gentleman, stating that I should be glad if arrangements could be made for me to have one or two private sittings at Dorincourt.

In December, 1930, Mr. Sproull wrote me that he was in a position to carry the matter a stage further, and would be glad of an opportunity of discussing it with me. In this letter, dated December 9, he added that he thought Mr. Arthur Ford (an American clairaudient medium) had mentioned to him that I had an office in the West End, and asked whether he could see me there at 5 o'clock on the following Wednesday.

I arranged to see him at Bond Street, and he assured me that, from his personal experiences with her, Mrs. Hamilton was a wonderful "medium."

As Mrs. Hamilton was, of course, quite unknown in this country, Mr. Sproull had assumed the position of sponsor, and had also undertaken to "make all the financial arrangements for her visit to this country."

Amongst other things, he told me that Mrs. Hamilton would come to England accompanied by her husband, who was, he said, a "direct voice" medium.

Mr. Sproull's visit to me was chiefly concerned with the financial side. He informed me that the British College of Psychic Science had offered to guarantee a contribution of £100 for her services, and that he was in negotiation with the Marylebone Society, who also required her. He asked me how much I would be prepared to pay, and I told him that for a series of eight séances I would be willing to pay £80.

I do not wish the unsophisticated to imagine for one moment that it is my usual habit to throw away £80 upon futilities. The eight so-called "materializing séances" with Mrs. Hamilton were, in my opinion, likely to prove worth that amount in my research work, whether they happened to achieve successful results or whether they were proved to be fraudulent.

Mr. Sproull considered the figure of £80 a fair one,

and at once accepted the offer. A fortnight after this interview he wrote me, in a letter dated December 23, as follows:

"DEAR SIR,

*Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton*

"The arrangements respecting the above are going forward smoothly. The British College of Psychic Science is at present in touch with the Marylebone Association as to whether the latter will co-operate with them, but I have the College's guarantee for £100, so that I anticipate Mrs. Hamilton will be here for the test séance at the College on March 30. I find the work for these Societies in arranging séances for nine weeks is considerable.

"The number of materialization séances for the Societies is restricted to four weekly, but I would hope for five for you: indeed I would use my best endeavours to give you as many materialization séances as possible in the week. In addition, Mr. Hamilton has expressed his desire to give you his direct voice séances. I take it that will be agreeable to you that this service will liquidate the non-returnable guarantee which you kindly offered, and which I have accepted on behalf of Mrs. Hamilton.

"I should be glad of your confirmation of the foregoing, and tentatively I would propose that Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton reserve either the week commencing April 27 or May 4 for you.

"Meantime, I send you the Season's Warmest Greetings.

"Cordially yours,

"(Signed) R. SPROULL."

It was only after Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton had hurriedly left the country that I was informed by Mrs. R. de Crespigny (the President) and Mrs. Hankey (the Secretary) of the British College that Mr. Sproull had visited them and stated that I was supporting and had engaged the services of Mrs. Hamilton. My name was used by Mr. Sproull as a recommendation of the Hamiltons, whereas in point of fact I knew nothing whatever of their powers. As Mrs. de Crespigny said to me when I saw her, after the Hamiltons had departed, the view the College had taken, when approached by

Mr. Sproull, was: "If they are good enough for Mr. Bradley then they are good enough for us."

When Mr. Sproull saw me, however, *before* I had entered into any arrangements with him, he told me that the British College of Psychic Science knew of Mrs. Hamilton's mediumistic powers, *and had engaged her.* Whereas the facts were that neither I nor the British College knew anything whatever about the Hamiltons. Mr. Sproull was the only one who knew of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, and he acted as their psychic-financial sponsor throughout.

Mr. Sproull had informed me that he had obtained a guarantee from the British College of Psychic Science, and expected to obtain a further guarantee from the Marylebone Society, and that beyond these guarantees the fees which Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton would receive for nine weeks' services would probably amount to over £400.

I regarded Mr. Sproull's letter to me of December 23 as not entirely satisfactory, so I wrote to him on December 30, 1930:

"December 30, 1930.

"DEAR MR. SPROULL,

*Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton*

"I shall be only too pleased to offer my support to Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, but I certainly think that £80 for one week is too much. I think, as you are arranging a series for nine weeks, that if I paid £50 for one week, that would be the correct proportion. If Mr. Hamilton is a good 'direct voice' medium himself I should then be quite willing to contribute a further £25 or £30 for a series of 'voice' sittings with him.

"Yours sincerely,

"H. D. B."

On January 2, 1931, I received the following reply:

"DEAR MR. BRADLEY,

*Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton*

"I thank you for your letter of 30th ult. Since writing you on 23rd, I would mention that the College guarantee has been varied slightly as it was felt that £100 was too much for the College *per se*, but the College and

individuals associated with the College are guaranteeing £75, although I am just awaiting a new formal letter to confirm this.

"In view of your guarantee I am agreeable that the charge to you for the week be £50 as you suggest, and I leave open the amount of any payment you may make to Mr. Hamilton for the direct voice séances.

"I propose opening a special bank account early in February for the guarantee monies, and about that time sending the one way tickets to America.

"Yours truly,

"(Signed) R. SPROULL."

I replied to Mr. Sproull as follows:

"January 5, 1931.

"DEAR MR. SPROULL,

*Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton*

"In reply to your letter of the 2nd inst. I shall be prepared to guarantee the sum of £50 for one week's séances to be held at Dorincourt. If you will remind me about the date when you are opening the account I will let you have a cheque.

"Yours sincerely,

"H. D. B."

After a lapse of four weeks I received the following letter from Mr. Sproull:

"DEAR MR. BRADLEY,

*Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton*

"If convenient to you I shall be glad if you will kindly send me this week your cheque for £80 referred to in our previous correspondence, as I would like to send the steamship tickets next week.

"Yours truly,

"(Signed) R. SPROULL, D.C."

In view of my very definite letter of January 5 in which I distinctly stated that the sum agreed upon was £50—to say nothing of Mr. Sproull's own letter of the 2nd in which he wrote: "I am agreeable that the charge to you for the week be £50, as you suggest"—this letter struck me as singularly disingenuous, and I therefore replied as follows:

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"February 4, 1931.

"DEAR MR. SPROULL,

"If you refer to your letter to me of January 2 and my reply of January 5 you will find that the sum agreed was £50.

"Yours sincerely,

"H. D. B."

I then sent a cheque for the agreed amount of £50, and obtained the following formal receipt:

"26 BUDGE Row, E.C.4.

*Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton*

"Received from H. Dennis Bradley, Esq., by cheque the sum of Fifty Pounds (£50) as guarantee monies for the expenses of the above to and from England.

"(Signed) R. SPROULL.  
*February 6, 1931.*"

With this receipt was the following covering letter:

"DEAR MR. BRADLEY,

*Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton*

"I thank you for your letter and I enclose receipt for your cheque.

"I had read our correspondence as leaving the amount of your guarantee still at £80 although the actual charge for the week was to be £50, leaving a difference of £30 to be settled between Mr. Hamilton and you when the time arose, otherwise the £30 was to be repaid to you out of Mrs. Hamilton's earnings here. In view of this, and the moderated charge for the week, if you can advance the further £30 I shall be much obliged.

"Yours truly,

"(Signed) R. SPROULL."

This I regarded as the most extraordinary letter of the series. No mention whatever had been made in any of my correspondence (carbon copies of which are, of course, in my possession) as to my being repaid £30 out of Mrs. Hamilton's earnings. A species of partnership with a person utterly unknown to me was entirely outside my philosophy—psychic or mundane. It was utterly

ridiculous to imagine that I should ever consider or consent to such an arrangement.

It was also difficult to understand Mr. Sproull's reference to a "moderate" charge. Fifty pounds a week seems to me a high figure for a genuine medium, and I will later express my considered opinion, based on my personal experiences, of this particular medium's genuineness.

Mr. Sproull said he would be obliged if I would advance a further £30. I am sure he was perfectly sincere in saying so, but of course I had not the slightest intention of being so foolish. I therefore wrote to him as follows:

"February 9, 1931.

"DEAR MR. SPROULL,

"Our correspondence regarding the amount I agreed to pay to Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton is quite clear.

"I am not prepared to pay more than £50 for a week's sittings, which I consider a very adequate price. If Mr. Hamilton gives any voice sittings, apart from the materializing sittings, I will arrange with him when he arrives an equitable fee, after having the first experience with him.

"I wish, however, to make it quite definite that I am not prepared to pay any more money at present.

"Yours faithfully,

"H. D. B."

## II

Towards the end of March Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton arrived in England. It was only after the fiasco which took place and their hurried departure back to America, that I discovered that among his various activities Mr. Hamilton was known in Chesterfield, Indiana, as the Rev. A. A. Hamilton, "a medium, ordained spiritualistic minister, and a speaker at the Camp Chesterfield." (I might mention that a number of these alleged "mediums" in America are known as "the Reverend," or if a woman, as the "Reverend Mrs. So-and-so." This is done to inspire confidence and compel the respect of the unsophisticated.)

Mr. Hamilton, when he reached London, did not pose as a Reverend; nor did he appear to me in any way reverend or reverent.

On his arrival Mr. Sproull brought him to see me

at my office. Mr. Hamilton is a thick-set man, probably in the middle forties. I have met all types of people in my time, and am a fair student of character. I am forced to admit that I was unfavourably impressed by Mr. Hamilton. He was extremely loquacious, but to my mind there was a distinct shiftiness in his manner. I made a point, however, of appearing very affable. He liked my cocktails, and I was liberal with them—I always find they help in certain cases. I invited him and his sponsor, Mr. Sproull, to lunch with me, in order that I might have a fuller opportunity of observing him.

I could not induce Mr. Hamilton to speak much about his own mediumship. He knew, of course, that I had very considerable experience, and, despite my affability, he was unquestionably very nervous of me from the start, and showed it.

It had been arranged by the British College that Mrs. Hamilton should hold her first materialization séance on Monday, March 30, 1931. Although I am a Life Member of the College I had not been invited to attend this séance, but I wrote to the Secretary requesting to be allowed to attend.

I told Mr. Hamilton that I should be present at the College on the following Monday, and I suggested that he and Mr. Sproull should lunch with me again on the following Tuesday, and that Mrs. Hamilton should accompany them. This was agreed to.

The following is a brief account of the one and only séance Mrs. Hamilton attempted to give:

*Sitting at the British College for Psychic Science,  
Monday, March 30, 1931. Medium: Mrs. Hamilton—  
Materialization.*

There were twenty-five sitters. The chairs were arranged close up round the walls of the room, Mr. Hamilton (husband of the medium) sitting next to the cabinet on the right—about four feet from it. The cabinet was formed by curtains drawn about eight feet high across one corner of the room. Next to the curtain, close up to it on the left side, sat Mr. Frank Hawken, the Secretary of the Marylebone Spiritualistic Society; next to him sat Mr. Sproull, who was sponsoring Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, and next to Mr. Sproull, an American "trumpet medium" named Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, who

had travelled over with the Hamiltons on the same boat. My subsequent experiences with Mrs. Murphey-Lydy are related in another chapter.

The medium was searched by two of the lady sitters—Mrs. Hankey and Mrs. Hawken.

I did not see the medium until the séance was about to commence. She was dressed in white pyjamas and a dressing-gown, and was ushered in by Mrs. Hankey and Mrs. Hawken and led to the curtains. Before sitting down she stated that she always sat in dark pyjamas, but that they had provided her with white. She appeared to me to be terribly nervous.

The lights were turned off, with the exception of one centre red light, which gave a considerable amount of luminosity. It was possible to see distinctly all the sitters present in the room.

Mr. Hamilton gave an address regarding conditions, stating that when a materialized form appeared nobody must touch it unless permission was given to do so. *He also stated that when a materialized form appeared he usually walked up to the cabinet and addressed it first.*

Mr. Hamilton then suggested that we should sing hymns and songs. Hymn after hymn had been sung for half an hour, but nothing happened. The medium then gave a loud shriek as if in pain. Later on, after another pause of ten minutes or so, she groaned and started to vomit. This continued for a short period. She appeared to me to be terrified. In my opinion something had gone wrong with the fake, and she was anxious to make her escape.

Just before the sitting terminated the medium called out, as if requiring him: "Mr. Hamilton," which seemed a peculiar way of addressing her husband, as she was not in a trance condition.

During the sitting the American trumpet medium, Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, remarked that they were sitting too close to the curtain, and suggested that some moved to the other side. Mr. Hawken, who was seated next to the curtain, firmly refused to move, saying that he did not intend to change his position, because he was keeping observation on Mr. Hamilton and on any movement of his towards the curtain. *If he had moved this would have left Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Sproull and Mrs. Murphey-Lydy all surrounding the medium.*

I was told afterwards that the medium, before entering the séance room, was stripped and carefully examined,

including the ears, combing the hair, etc., and that the garments in which she sat were provided by the College. These were 'proper test conditions, but Mr. Hamilton afterwards complained very bitterly that the medium had been searched so thoroughly.

There was a distinct feeling of "slump," and Mr. Hamilton's contribution to the general gaiety was a suggestion of a further singing of hymns. No attempt whatever was made to give any demonstration, and the fiasco terminated, after lasting for about an hour.

I left the College immediately afterwards, as I did not wish to discuss the matter with anyone there. I had formed my own opinions, and I was determined that during the series of sittings the Hamiltons had arranged to give me I would allow them plenty of rope, in order to produce their alleged "materializations," which I felt certain I should be able to expose.

On the following day, Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Sproull came to lunch with me as arranged. Mr. Hamilton stated that his wife was unable to accept my invitation, as she had been ill and hysterical all night. He told me that after the "materialization séance" he had held a sitting in his rooms with the "trumpet medium," Mrs. Murphey-Lydy and one or two of his friends, and that his "Guide" had said that the circle at the College was a bad one; that Mr. Hawken was responsible, and that they would *not* hold the sittings as arranged with the Marylebone Society.

I knew that his statement that the circle was a bad one was absolute nonsense, and his intense resentment against Mr. Hawken was easily explained. The simple and obvious reason that he was so annoyed with Mr. Hawken was that at the last moment he (Mr. Hawken) had insisted on taking the chair next to the curtain, and had, quite rightly, refused to budge from it. It is evident that this chair is always reserved for one of the "medium's" associates, or for unobservant and credulous friends.

Mr. Hamilton's complaint in regard to the searching of his wife was infantile. She was searched in the usual and correct way, by Mrs. Hankey (Secretary of the British College) and by Mrs. Hawken, the wife of the Secretary of the Marylebone Association.

Mr. Hamilton stated that they did not expect her to be treated in this manner, and that he had explained to

Mr. Hawken the nature of the searching and testing which was given in U.S.A. It became apparent to me that the sort of searching which Mr. Hamilton demanded was probably one affording innumerable loopholes, and was one which permitted the "medium" to wear her own garments.

The search made having been a thorough one, and the fact that other garments than her own were supplied, resulted in the "séance" being a failure. The illusions could not be produced.

The excuses made were futile.

The determination, immediately arrived at—obviously because a proper search had been made, and because Mr. Hawken insisted on sitting next to the curtain—to refuse to hold sittings with the Marylebone Society, was in itself so suspicious, that in my eyes the fraudulency of the Hamiltons' proceedings was at once assured.

Despite this conviction, however, I refrained from expressing any opinions to Mr. Hamilton. What I desired was to observe the actual methods used in their attempts to produce the alleged phenomena in my own house.

I took Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Sproull to lunch, and adopted a very careless attitude regarding the whole affair. Mr. Hamilton had no opportunity of escaping the luncheon appointment, since it had been previously arranged, but in spite of my apparent friendliness towards him I could easily appreciate by his manner that underneath his somewhat exuberant affability he was desperately frightened of me.

My attitude, however, succeeded in impressing Mr. Sproull, who was probably duped throughout by the Hamiltons; so much so, that at lunch he suggested that as Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton refused to fulfil their engagement with the Marylebone Society, perhaps I would like to take over, in addition to my own series, the sittings which they had arranged to hold with the Society. Mr. Sproull was, by this time, evidently very worried over the financial side. Of course, I had not the slightest intention of having any more sittings than the six arranged for, which I knew would be amply sufficient for all my purposes, so I diplomatically waived the question. I said that if any alteration happened to be made in the arrangements, I would endeavour to fit in my series at an earlier date to suit the convenience of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton. Frankly, I had been looking

forward to them very much. I have had many interesting experiences in life, and I knew by this time that Mr. Hamilton, or the Rev. A. A. Hamilton, was an American (spiritualistic) crook. This fact in no way affected me. I have met any number of crooks, some of whom are infinitely more interesting and amusing than the ordinary respectably dull person.

The following day I received from Mr. Sproull a copy of a very lengthy and somewhat confused letter, which he had written, possibly under the stress of emotion, to the British College of Psychic Science. I will excuse Mr. Sproull for the absurdities it contained, because the feeble excuses made were in all probability inspired and dictated by Mr. Hamilton. In this letter, dated April 1, 1931, and signed by Mr. Sproull, he said (I quote verbatim):

“ 26 BUDGE Row,  
LONDON, E.C.4.

*April 1, 1931.*

“ The British College of Psychic Science,  
15 Queens Gate, S.W.7.

“ DEAR SIRS,

“ I write with reference to the séance held on Monday, March 30, when there was present a large representation of the Councils of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association and the British College of Psychic Science.

“ There was no failure on the part of the medium, as is shown by the sufferings she has borne as a result of the séance, but there was a very positive omission on the part of the controllers of the two Societies to provide the correct atmosphere, and one to which I cannot allow the medium any risk of a repetition. Our arrangements must therefore be considered as cancelled. Nevertheless the Hamiltons and I are anxious you should get the results you had hoped to get, and therefore that fresh arrangements can be quickly come to with you. In any case, working with the Marylebone Association is *definitely ruled out* and is not to be a question for discussion, although no doubt many Marylebone sitters who can provide good conditions will be enabled to see the phenomena at your place.

“ On Monday last there was a general absence of display of careful forethought and planning in regard to some factors essential for a physical phenomena séance. The slightest acquaintance with mental and other con-

ditions, which humble researchers who have got results in this field have recorded in their writings, could easily have avoided the fiasco the séance proved to be. If séances of this nature are carried out in the spirit shown on March 30 no wonder we have no physical mediumship worthy of the title in this country.

" Specifically I am disgusted with the treatment of my guest, the medium, Mrs. Hamilton, and the violation of the 'Agreed Test Conditions.' These 'Agreed Test Conditions' in relation to the treatment of the medium read :

" '(a) Search of the medium before and after séance by the same two lady members, one of whom is to be the College representative and the other that of the Association.

" '(b) Control of medium to and from her room to chair in her cabinet.'

" Now the object of these conditions was that you would be assured by an *ordinary* search that the medium had nothing concealed about her person that could permit of misrepresentation, and it was intended they should not distress the medium or affect her Guides. On March 24 Mr. Hamilton explained to Mr. Hawken the nature of the searching and testing which is given in U.S.A., and to which Mrs. Hamilton was accustomed, but Mr. Hawken did not reveal that Monday's procedure was to be so different and pernicious.

" On the other hand, what actually happened on Monday was a fundamental disturbance which set up a wrong atmosphere, e.g.

" (a) Burning a lighted match at the medium's back (in regard to applying molten sealing-wax near the medium's neck to the back of the fancy test garment you provided for her).

" (b) Combed her hair (but competent searchers could easily have assured themselves there was nothing in her short hair by means more agreeable to the medium).

" (c) Washed her hands and face (her face had obviously very little or no make-up on it, and to afterwards say that this is the way to be satisfied there was no luminous paint smeared on the medium's face shows how limited in understanding was the mind which conceived this idea).

"(d) Having the medium rinse her mouth with a coloured warm water, the first flavour of which she rightly considered distasteful (one's first impression of the taste I have since found to be of a doubtfully agreeable disinfectant one gets at the dentist's, and surely ordinary water would have served all purposes).

"(e) There was a lack of sympathy radiating to the medium from the sitters as a body (however estimable sitters were as individuals there were failures to contribute to the mental homogeneity of the meeting. Because of this the medium's Guides could not get close enough to keep out the strangulation influence which eventually supervened).

"Any seeming momentary consent on the part of the medium as each of (a) to (d) were put to her by the searchers at the last minute was no adequate reason for their infliction on her when they had not been mentioned to me or Mr. Hamilton, and it is therefore no exaggeration to assert that the springing of the above surprises on the medium must be held as contributing to the failure of the spirit friends to manifest.

"It should not be overlooked that the medium was on the premises fully half an hour before a start was made by the searchers; during this time less obtrusive observation by the searchers could have done all that was necessary in regard to some of the above and other steps in the search I need not mention.

"As you were to get as many as three test séances in all, had you an elementary familiarity with the highly sensitive nature of mediums generally, and materializing mediums in a strange country in particular, you surely never would have authorized such a departure from the Agreed Test Conditions in this first séance. I hesitate to contemplate the lengths to which you would have gone in the third test.

"An item which cannot be allowed to pass without comment is in regard to the colour of the garments provided. Mr. Hawken suggested Mrs. Hamilton should wear your garments, and after consultation by Mr. Hamilton and myself with the medium it was agreed she would do so, although Mr. Hamilton and I said she preferred her own. *When describing the U.S.A. test conditions to Mr. Hawken* Mr. Hamilton drew attention that Mrs. Hamilton's garments were always black, and

were merely a black silk dress, black sateen knickers, black woollen stockings and black shoes. Nevertheless, you provided a one-piece woollen garment which was white, a ridiculous colour for a test garment, in that it is common knowledge full-form materialization manifestations are robed principally in white.

"Another factor which made for failure was Mr. Hawken's usurpation of my place next the cabinet. Your officials knew and saw that Mr. Hamilton and I were solicitous for the care of the medium and were located, Mr. Hamilton one side, and I on the other side of the cabinet. Mr. Hawken refused my invitation to exchange seats with him on the excuse that he was to observe Mr. Hamilton did not go near the cabinet, a duty he could have fulfilled in my seat, the next one to his own. Indeed, had Mr. Hawken wished, he could have observed Mr. Hamilton and the cabinet from many other positions than the one he fitted himself into at the last moment in the well-lighted room. Before Mr. Hawken placed himself in his position there was a space between the cabinet and myself; Mr. Hawken's position filled this space so that it was not easy for him to avoid touching the curtain.

"No doubt also you would like to know that immediately after the failure on Monday, Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton and myself and Mrs. Murphey-Lydy and Count Hamilton were assembled at Mr. Hamilton's flat, when without the slightest effort on our parts the spirit Guides who have been co-operating in this venture spoke long and loud, in no uncertain tones, through the trumpet, and in the direct voice, as to our future policy in view of your breach in the searching-room of the 'Agreed Test Conditions.' And be it noted it was real startling news for us to be told from the other side of these breaches, for neither Mr. Hamilton nor I nor our two friends had up to that time any realization of even the possibility of these breaches. Moreover, it was beyond the scope of Mrs. Hamilton to have appreciated this facet of the happenings, however much she may have felt things had gone wrong.

"At the aforementioned voice meeting I was also instructed to point out to you that the conditions on Monday night were such that the medium's spirit friends found the utmost difficulty in saving her from transition (death). Had conditions been better the circumstances which caused the medium to shriek and

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vomit violently would never have affected her. How soon she will recover we do not know.

"The spirit friends instructed us that all the dominating adverse influences must be avoided at future séances, and you know we cannot demand of the spirit people.

"In conclusion I have no doubt that loving, sympathetic and harmonious conditions can be provided by you in future demonstrations, so as to relieve Monday's tendency to give umbrage to the spirit friends of the sitters.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Signed) ROBERT SPROULL."

I publish this at length because it is to my mind one of the most ridiculous letters I have ever read; yet it appears that Mr. Sproull at the time genuinely believed in what he wrote. The date—April 1—is also significant.

The tone of the letter suggests that, not being an acute and experienced observer, Mr. Sproull was duped by the Hamiltons and Mrs. Murphey-Lydy throughout.

Strangely enough, the very next day I received from Mr. Sproull a copy of another letter, which he had sent to the British College:

" 26 BUDGE Row,  
LONDON, E.C.4.

April 2, 1931.

"The British College of Psychic Science,  
15 Queens Gate, S.W.7.

"DEAR SIRS,

"Further to my letter of yesterday I would like to add that as a go-between the Hamiltons and the two Societies I personally feel very keenly the distinction between the Marylebone Spiritualist Association and yourselves, and I shall use every endeavour to get things to go as originally intended.

"Moreover, although yesterday Mrs. de Crespigny<sup>1</sup> was good enough to suggest that the next séance (Tuesday, April 7) should be held as originally intended for the public, I think it would be well to also look upon it as part of the tests, and to include a sufficient number of active observers from your Council or officers to serve this purpose. This may mean reducing the number of

<sup>1</sup> President of the British College.

outsiders, but the cause of spiritualism is virtually at stake. Moreover, you or the Marylebone Spiritualist Association (and I have heard of others) have made publications of the fact of tests to be given, and I do not think a mere verbal statement at the séances can be good for 'truth' in the circumstances.

"Now as to the actual procedure and precautions at tests. I do not think it unreasonable that there should be full and frank discussion as to these, and the severity of tests can certainly be increased as their number is increased. Moreover, I would like it to be clearly understood that in my opinion there was no step taken as isolated items in Monday's test that was unreasonable—it was only apparently the unexpected nature of the steps which seemed to upset the medium, especially as she is stated to be suffering from blood pressure. I have spoken on this to Mrs. Hamilton and she is agreeable to go through again all that was done on Monday by way of test, but whether or not on Tuesday I cannot yet say.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Signed) R. SPROULL."

It will be observed from this letter that Mrs. Hamilton, who was so grievously ill as a result of the séance at which nothing happened, was still in a fit enough condition to attend a sitting later in the same evening with Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, the "trumpet medium"; such a quick recovery is certainly phenomenal—if only from a materialistic point of view—the more especially as Mr. Sproull stated in his letter that an hour or so prior to this it was only with the utmost difficulty that the medium's spirit friends had "saved her from transition (death)." I must remember this in future when I am in danger of being transitioned.

To this letter was attached the following memorandum:

*"Test Points, per R. Sproull"*

"Every observer to see the medium and Mr. Hamilton before and after the séance.

"Mrs. Hamilton to be searched and controlled, etc., before and after séance. (Later tests, strip.)

"Mr. Hamilton to be searched and controlled, etc., before and after séance. (Later tests, strip.)

"Curtains to be searched before and after séance. (Subsequent tests, use your curtains.)

"Cabinet (including chair and blanket) to be searched before and after séance.

"Room to be searched before and after séance.

"Each observer:

"(a) To be placed so as to note clearly one feature of each materialization, e.g., head and face, body, arms, legs, feet, posture, voice intonation, grunts and yawns.

"(b) To use a notebook during the séance to record times and observations.

"Other observers to note:

"(a) Mr. Hamilton's movements.

"(b) Curtain and cabinet movements.

"(c) Sitters' movements.

"(d) Relationship of movements.

"Right placing of observers is important having regard to their duties.

"A stenographer with her prompter to be present, also a chairman to control meeting should need arise.

"List of hymns to be sung and a leader for singing provided.

"Above not submitted yet to Mr. Hamilton."

This letter amused me intensely, being, in fact, an absolute contradiction in essentials of his letter written to the British College on the previous day. Evidently Mr. Sproull was, at this time, in a highly nervous condition. This is particularly illustrated in his preposterous remark that "the cause of spiritualism is virtually at stake." How the cause of spiritualism could be at stake in regard to an experiment in which nothing whatever had happened is difficult to understand. Also his statement:

"I do not think a mere verbal statement at the séances can be good for 'truth' in the circumstances," seems to me to display either a condition of incoherence or neuroticism.

Mr. Sproull then, within twenty-four hours, proceeded to relinquish and entirely contradict the arguments of his first letter, when he wrote: "I would like it to be clearly understood that in my opinion there was no step taken as isolated items in Monday's test that was unreasonable." Mr. Sproull therefore explicitly states that everything that was done by the British College and the Marylebone Society was in his opinion reasonable.

And then, under his acute mental stress, Mr. Sproull proceeded to evolve his own test points, in connection with

which it is somewhat comic to note his naïve and rather hopeful remark at the bottom of this document: "Above not submitted yet to Mr. Hamilton."

This letter, written on April 2, when Mr. Sproull evolved his own test points, had not been shown to Mr. Hamilton, but on the next day, Good Friday, April 3, Mr. Sproull telephoned me at Dorincourt, and in a somewhat agitated manner told me that Mrs. Hamilton, being still very ill with blood pressure or something, Mr. Hamilton had decided to sail for America on the following morning. Personally, if I were very ill I should prefer a quiet bedroom to a tempestuous sea.

Mr. Sproull telephoned me from the flat he had engaged for the Hamiltons, and I knew at once, when he informed me of this decision, that the Hamiltons had "got the wind up" and had determined to clear out of the country and take the fastest liner back to their beloved and reverend friends in U.S.A.

I was certainly annoyed at being deprived of my series of interesting investigations with Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, and I at once told Mr. Sproull over the 'phone that I should, of course, expect him to return the £50 I had advanced. He seemed very worried at my sordidly material outlook, and said that he could not agree to do this. I told him that a considerable amount of money had been advanced to these people by myself and others, and that a return must certainly be made. I told him that the Hamiltons, since they had failed to fulfil their undertakings, should return the money to him, but whether they did so or not I should hold him responsible. He said that they had no money, and I then asked: "Is Mr. Hamilton destitute?" He very kindly went on to say that the Hamiltons had promised him that they would come back to pay another visit to this country in October, and that I could then have my week's sittings. Which was very nice of him—and them. He then suggested that as he was 'phoning from the Hamiltons' flat that I should talk to Mr. Hamilton. I was extremely strong over the 'phone to Mr. Hamilton. He whined and carneyed and said he had no money, but knowing that he was a crook, I told him that I regarded the matter as one which might be better dealt with by Scotland Yard. I reminded him that I had paid him a considerable sum of money through Mr. Sproull, that I regarded his whole behaviour as fraudulent, and that as he and his wife were not fulfilling their engagement I regarded it as a

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case of obtaining money by false pretences. That was the last I heard of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, who scampered out of the country on the following day.

### III

After the hurried departure of the Hamiltons I wrote to Mr. Sproull as follows:

"April 7, 1931.

"DEAR SIR,

"With reference to our conversation on the telephone on Friday last, when you informed me that Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton were hurriedly leaving the country, I must ask you to refund the amount of £50 which I paid you on February 6. This sum of money was paid to you for their services under an agreement between us, which was confirmed in your letter of January 2 last, in which you stated: 'I am agreeable that the charge to you for the week be £50.'

"I must ask you to let me have a cheque for this amount.

"Yours faithfully,

"H. D. B."

Mr. Sproull refused to return me the £50 which I had paid him for the Hamiltons' services for a week. From an account which I received later it was shown that the Hamiltons were paid in all £125, which was made up as follows:

British College of Psychic Science	£25
Marylebone Association . . .	25
Mr. A. H. (whom I do not know)	25
H.D.B. . . . .	50
	—
	£125
	—

From this it is shown that the British College contributed £25. This does not tally with the statement made to me by Mr. Sproull in his letter of January 2, 1931, in which he stated that the British College was contributing £75.

Mr. Sproull told me that I must apply to the Hamiltons to refund me the £50. As Mr. Hamilton had told me

on the 'phone that he had not got any money, and since he had cleared out of the country and I did not know his address, I seemed to stand an excellent chance of recovery.

I therefore again wrote to Mr. Sproull, telling him that as the money had been paid by me to him as sponsor, I regarded him as responsible. He replied, saying:

"I did not give any undertaking, and you will recollect that fulfilment of séances at your place were dependent on authentication at certain test séances elsewhere."

This, of course, was entirely untrue, and I replied, saying:

"The fulfilment of the undertaking to give a series of séances under *my* supervision was not 'dependent upon authentication of certain test séances elsewhere.' The series of sittings arranged with me were entirely independent. No arrangements had been made that I should even attend other test séances."

Mr. Sproull, however, continued to maintain that he was "merely an agent in the matter," that the Hamiltons were the principals, and that any right of action I might have must be against the Hamiltons as principals, and not against him as agent. I asked him what grounds he had for his original statement to me that the Hamiltons were genuine mediums, and whether he had any records to show. In reply to this, in a letter dated April 11, he said:

"I enclose a Chesterfield booklet which will give you the Hamiltons' address, and help you to appreciate that I made *bona fide* statements."

The booklet I received from Mr. Sproull was entitled "Camp Chesterfield. 1929." In this the following information is given concerning Mrs. Bertha Holtz-Hamilton:

"She was directed to the Madison Avenue Spiritual Temple, where she began her development of mediumship, with Mrs. Sallie Blake as her instructor. After a long and sincere period of concentration and effort, her

## MEDIUMS AT CAMP CHESTERFIELD.



MRS. BERTHA HOLTZ HAMILTON.  
Not a Rev., but the wife of a  
Rev. A thoroughly experienced  
practitioner, of a retiring—even  
retreating—disposition.



MRS. MARY MURPHHEY-LYDY.  
According to the official pamphlet,  
“started her career with a vision.”  
Since then, becoming keen-sighted,  
she developed an eye for the main  
chance.



REV. ANNA THRONDSEN.  
Her motto is: “The ones worth  
while are the ones with a smile,  
when everything goes dead wrong.”  
Her smile is described as “be-  
speaking the great beauty of her  
indwelling soul.”



MRS. SARAH E. PIERCE, M.D.  
Described in the official pamphlet  
as “The field of ripened grain.”

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development was attained, and for twenty-five years she has brought joy and consolation to thousands of people.

"Mrs. Hamilton's mediumship consists of phases of Trumpet, Materialization, Clairvoyance, and Clairaude-nce, and trumpet-in-the-light. Six years ago she became the wife of the Rev. A. A. Hamilton."

Mrs. Hamilton certainly brought me no joy, but the "Camp Chesterfield" booklet did. It is one of the most illuminating documents I have ever read. It contains also a priceless "picture gallery." In this book (published by the Indiana Association of Spiritualists) sixteen photographs in all of the "mediums" of the "Camp" are published. (A photograph of Mrs. Hamilton appears on page 256.) I have reproduced several of these photographs, among which is included her sympathetic friend, Mrs. Murphey-Lydy (see page 258), to whom my next chapter is devoted. In my opinion these pictures provide an exceedingly interesting study, though they are likely to appeal more to the psychologist than to the lover of human beauty. I have added them to my own art collection, and I am not sure that they are not worth £50.

Immediately after the departure of the Hamiltons I called to see Mrs. Rose de Crespigny, the President of the British College, and gave her my opinion that the Hamiltons were frauds. It was then that I asked her what credentials had been given to the College before she engaged them, and she told me that Mr. Sproull had informed her distinctly that "Mr. Dennis Bradley had engaged them."

The Hamiltons had agreed to give the College a series of sixteen séances, from April 7 until May 2. It was arranged that the sitters were to number fifteen to twenty persons at each séance. The charge for each sitter was fixed as follows:

Members of the British College	£1 7s. 6d.
Associates	1 10s. 0d.
Non-members (introduced)	1 15s. 0d.

At the one sitting I attended, there were twenty-five persons present.

It will be seen from these arrangements that the fees for each séance would amount to approximately £30, which would average £120 per week.

The Marylebone Spiritualist Association made similar arrangements, their dates being, for sixteen sittings, from May 11 to June 6.

In between the British College and the Marylebone Association my private series of one week was to have been held, at a charge of £50 for Mrs. Hamilton's "materializations," and a few demonstrations by Mr. Hamilton, which might, with luck, have produced a further £30.

I wrote to Mr. Frank Hawken, Secretary of the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, asking for his views regarding the one séance held, and in his reply to me he stated:

"All the arrangements, as you know, were in the hands of the British College, and I only intervened to the extent of suggesting to Mrs. de Crespigny that Mr. Sproull, as manager of the Hamiltons, should be asked to take another seat, or that someone should be asked to sit between him and the cabinet, and it was not until Mrs. de Crespigny came in and locked the door, and asked me to occupy the vacant seat in front of Mr. Sproull which she had placed there, that I was aware that she had selected me to guard the cabinet.

"During the séance Mr. Sproull and Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, another professional medium, and, I understand, a friend of the Hamiltons, three times endeavoured to get me to change seats with them so that they should be closer to the cabinet. Naturally I refused to do this, having been placed there by Mrs. de Crespigny, who was in charge of the test séance. In spite of my refusal, as you know, towards the end of the séance he (Mr. Hamilton) suggested that someone should cross over to the door, and when this was agreed upon he once again endeavoured to get me to leave my seat, with the result that I had to speak out and give my reasons for remaining there.

"It is, of course, entirely illogical that they should have refused to sit at the Marylebone Society, considering that the conditions of the séance objected to were those made by the British College. Obviously if they decided against sitting with one or the other Society it should have been the British College."

*S.P. & C. L.*

## MEDIUMS AT CAMP CHESTERFIELD.



MRS. EMMA CARPENTER.

Who has "completed her unfoldment."



REV. NELLIE CURRY.

An excellent example of the health-giving properties of the Camp.



REV. MABLE RIPPLE.

Secretary of Camp Chesterfield, which she made "aggressive, up-to-date . . . having two large hotels and an ice-cream parlour"—a notable service to the cause of psychics.



REV. NINA CHALLEN RICHARDS.

A pastor, whose work is described as "unusual." The pamphlet states: "From early childhood she was thought peculiar, when she grew to womanhood it became evident she was psychic,"—not peculiar.

[to face page 258.]

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## FLIGHT OF THE HAMILTONS 259

This very interesting and straightforward letter was, of course, a complete and full confirmation of what I had observed.

During the Hamiltons' flying visit to this country I was in contact with Mr. Hamilton before and after their one séance. I am quite certain that he had been warned about me by someone, as from the very commencement he appeared to be frightened of me.

In my preliminary observation of him, from his conversation with me he showed himself as a cleverish but crafty individual. He took noticeably good care that I should not have the opportunity of meeting Mrs. Hamilton. Their attitude later was that of a terror-stricken couple. Had they been able to "get away with it," with some hundreds of credulous spiritualists, in two months they would have been able to pick up (as shown by the figures quoted) the best part of a thousand pounds in the course of their pleasant little trip across the "Herring Pond."

I shall await with enormous interest their promised second visit to this country in October, 1931. If they should make this adventure it will be my pleasure to introduce them to a new sitter—on the Bench.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FRAUDULENT PERFORMANCE OF MRS. MURPHEY-LYDY

*Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry's invitation—Suggested precautions—A friend of the Hamiltons—The "Camp Chesterfield" certificate of character—I am not recognized—A suspicious trumpet—A curious costume—Meet "Dr. Green"—I shift my position—And detect the medium speaking—A sample "conversation"—"Huh-huf—Hen-hen—Mah-mah"—The methods of fraudulent mediums—A bad shot—Not one solitary point of evidence—A disgusting farce—"Don't you touch my trumpet!"—The moisture on the mouthpiece—How the credulous are duped—A Queen's Hall meeting—Curious seating arrangements—An absolute fiasco—A professional conjurer more competent and more amusing.*

#### I

*Friday, June 5, 1931.*

ON this date I attended a sitting under the "voice" mediumship of Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, at the British College of Psychic Science, 15 Queen's Gate, London, S.W.

The sitting was arranged by Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry, who took her own private party of sitters. When she invited me, Miss Neilson-Terry told me that she had arranged for the sitting to take place in her flat in Welbeck Street, but on the Friday morning she 'phoned me to say that the medium had stated that she would rather hold the sitting in the séance room of the British College, as she felt more at home there.

A few days previously, Miss Neilson-Terry had told me over the 'phone that she had sat on two occasions under Mrs. Murphey-Lydy's mediumship, and that she would like me to attend in order that I might observe the proceedings very carefully. I then asked her not to let the medium know beforehand that I was going to attend, and she told me that she certainly would not do so, neither was she informing the medium as to the identities of other sitters.

It was not until after the sitting that Miss Neilson-Terry told me that when she had sat at the British College previously with this medium, the circles of sitters

were somewhat large, comprising many persons whom she did not know—members of the College, etc., and that in her opinion the first sitting was not impressive, and that the second sitting was distinctly bad.

It must again be emphasized, however, that I was not told of this *before* the sitting, therefore I was in no way prejudiced. I knew, however, that Mrs. Murphey-Lydy had travelled over from America in company with Mr. Hamilton and Mrs. Hamilton, the alleged materialization medium, whose behaviour I have described in the preceding chapter.

In the advertising pamphlet entitled "Camp Chesterfield. 1929" issued by the Indiana Association of Spiritualists, to which I have already alluded, there is a page devoted to laudatory notes on Mrs. Murphey-Lydy's career. I reproduce a photograph of her (see page 258), taken from this pamphlet, together with photographs of other mediums functioning in this Camp, and append herewith a few relevant extracts from the same publication :

"Thousands of people from coast to coast are familiar with the beautiful manifestations of Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, the materialization and trumpet medium. In her early development of mediumship she was associated with Maggie Vestol and W. C. Jessup, two of the most prominent and strongest trumpet mediums of that day, who have since passed to spirit life. Mrs. Lydy has been a practising medium in Chesterfield Camp for many years, and served the Indiana Psychic Research Society at Indianapolis for a period of a year.

"Mrs. Lydy has made several tours throughout the United States, spreading the gospel of spiritualism through the remarkable teachings and instructions given by Dr. Green, her leading Guide, and 'Sunflower,' the little message bearer.

"For the past six years she has usually made Detroit her home. Almost every Sunday evening she serves some Church in that city with her marvellous demonstration of the trumpet-in-the-light. The spirit 'voices' are so distinct that they can be heard throughout the Church. This is convincing the multitudes.

"Mrs. Lydy has three children: a son living in California, and two daughters. The elder daughter, Gertrude, is the wife of Count Richard Hamilton, of Stockholm, Sweden, who is now lecturing and healing

in England, and is associated with the leading spiritualists of Europe.

"Mrs. Murphey-Lydy is doing good and important work for spiritualism, and always extends a welcome to persons of every faith."

"The world needs more mediums with the same fair view of life who will develop the forces more fully and beautiful [sic]. She is a very likeable woman and an ardent exponent of the manifestations and teachings of spiritualism."

That is how Mrs. Murphey-Lydy is described at Chesterfield Camp. It may be added that she is a woman of fifty-nine years of age.

The sitting on this evening took place shortly after 8 o'clock.

We were received in the séance room at the British College by the medium and her son-in-law, the Swedish Count Hamilton.

It was in this room that the fiasco of the Hamilton "materializing" séance took place. On that occasion there were some forty people present, and Mrs. Murphey-Lydy and Count Hamilton were among the sitters. I was not introduced to Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, but I was introduced to Count Hamilton. The introduction was a casual and quick one, and in the spasmodic movements of a crowd it is just possible that Count Hamilton could not have caught my name or known who I was. We sat next to each other in the circle that evening, in a somewhat dim red electric light, and exchanged, from time to time, a few casual remarks. I am fairly sure that Mrs. Murphey-Lydy did not know me, and I am under the impression that Count Hamilton did *not* remember my name, because after I had made one or two remarks during the sitting, he asked Miss Neilson-Terry whether I was a doctor. I was glad that I was not recognized, because it must be remembered that Mrs. Murphey-Lydy and Mrs. Hamilton, the alleged materializing medium, are professional friends, and therefore Mrs. Murphey-Lydy could have learnt from Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton the opinion I had expressed upon their behaviour, and with this knowledge would naturally have been extremely suspicious of me.

None of the sitters on this Friday evening were introduced to the medium or to Count Hamilton. Miss

Phyllis Neilson-Terry fixed the position of each of the sitters. She told me afterwards that she had deliberately placed me next to the medium.

The positions in the circle, right to left, were as follow: The medium, myself, Mrs. Hay, Mr. Edward Huskinson (editor of *The Tatler*), Mrs. Mortimer Bryans, Count Hamilton, Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry and Lord Howard de Walden, next to and on the left of the medium. In the centre of the circle was placed a table of about three feet square, over which a cloth had been placed. On this an aluminium trumpet rested. This trumpet was made in four collapsible sections, which stretched to a length of nearly four feet. It was the longest trumpet I have ever seen used at any "voice" séance. Nor have I ever sat with a genuinely developed "voice" medium who has ever had a table placed in the centre covered with a cloth for the trumpet to lie on.

The trumpet, as placed on this table, was of course within the easiest possible access of the medium.

The atmosphere of the room, from which all air was excluded, was extremely warm, but, despite the heat, the medium was wearing what appeared to be a rather voluminous cape made of silkish material, which reached several inches below her waist. This cape was kept on throughout the entire proceedings, until just before the sitting closed, when she threw it off, and dropped it just behind her chair in the circle. Seated next to her, I heard it drop on the floor.

Count Hamilton switched off the white electric light, leaving a red electric light for about one minute. He then turned this off and we were left in pitch-black, impenetrable darkness.

There was *no luminosity on the trumpet*, therefore no movement of any description could be seen.

The medium suggested that we should open by singing hymns, which we attempted. Personally I loathe the sort of stereotyped hymns that are usually sung at séances. Phyllis Neilson-Terry sang them very sweetly, but most of us sang them very badly.

Then the medium requested us to recite the Lord's Prayer. This was done, and in view of what occurred later I regarded the recitation of this prayer as a nauseous blasphemy.

Count Hamilton remarked that when the "voices" came through the sitters must not be surprised if they seemed to have an American accent, because this was

accounted for by the fact that the ectoplasmic forces through which they were enabled to manifest had to be drawn from the medium. Such a statement warrants strong criticism, for at genuine "direct voice" séances the accents of the "communicating entities" are individual, and entirely different to the voice and accents of the medium.

The first "manifestation" was a childish "voice" speaking through the non-luminous trumpet. After this there was a pause for a minute or so, and then Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry sang a little trilling solo in that unique voice of hers.

After this, using the non-luminous trumpet, the childish American "voice" said, "I like that." Afterwards the "voice" said it was "Sunflower." A few sentences were spoken by the sitters to the "voice," and these were answered in the affected manner of an undeveloped intelligence. The childish tones remarked that Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry's voice was "lovely"—which it obviously was. So Miss Neilson-Terry again trilled a few notes and then asked the "voice" to try and sing with her, which it did—excruciatingly.

Then we were introduced to the "voice" of "Dr. Green," evidently using the non-luminous trumpet. A fairly lengthy conversation was carried on by "Dr. Green" with various of the sitters. It was an interesting experience to carry on a conversation with this "voice," in view of the statements made in the "Camp Chesterfield" pamphlet that the "Gospel of spiritualism had been spread through the remarkable teachings and instructions given by 'Dr. Green.'" On this occasion, however, "Dr. Green," in answer to questions, confined himself pointedly to obvious banalities, and I noticed that his deepish "voice" betrayed occasional distinct traces of femininity.

The "voice" of "Dr. Green" appeared to come from some three or four feet from where the medium was sitting. On the second occasion that the eminent medical gentleman spoke, listening very acutely, I caught a sound from the medium while the "voice" was speaking. Very quietly I shifted my position to the extreme left-hand edge of my chair, and, resting there on one leg, and leaning sideways, holding my breath, I kept my ear within six inches of the medium's mouth. *She was talking into the trumpet the whole time.* It was the most flagrant and deliberate fraud I have ever experienced.

Throughout the whole of the evening every one of the alleged "spirit voices" was produced by Mrs. Murphey-Lydy in this way. For me it was an exhausting evening, because of my strained position. It was, of course, absolutely necessary for me to lean well away from the medium when taking my breath, and then hold it, as long as possible, while listening within a few inches of her face. An onion in my salad would have betrayed me.

Until the end of the evening not one of these alleged "spirit voices" addressed me; I was therefore able to remain silent most of the time. On some half a dozen occasions "Dr. Green" carried on conversations with various of the sitters, and, now and again, I took the opportunity of speaking to this "Dr. Green voice." Whenever I asked a question I leaned away four feet from the medium, and then, my question finished, immediately leaned back close to her face, and heard her speaking the reply into the mouthpiece. I spoke agreeably, as if I were quite impressed by the "voice," and was careful to do nothing likely to interrupt the performance, because I particularly desired to see to what lengths the Lydy would go.

In the course of the evening about seven alleged "spirit voices," claiming to be different friends of the various sitters, spoke through the trumpet. Each one of these was produced by Mrs. Murphey-Lydy in precisely the same way, whilst I was listening intently to her voice speaking through the mouthpiece. When producing these personal "voices" she spoke in a husky and indistinct whisper. The method was as follows:

The trumpet was lifted in the direction of one or other of the sitters, and then in muffled, whispering gasps:

MRS. MURPHEY-LYDY (*through the trumpet*): Huf-huf.

SITTER: Hello. Yes. Are you talking to me?

MRS. MURPHEY-LYDY (*faintly whispering*): Yes.

SITTER: Who is it? Tell me who you are.

TRUMPET: Hen-hen.

SITTER: What is that?

TRUMPET: Mah-hah.

SITTER: I can't quite catch it.

TRUMPET: Fah-hah.

SITTER: Speak louder. I can't quite hear.

TRUMPET: Jan-jar.

And so the whispering "voice" goes on, until the sitter happens to volunteer the name, asking "Is it So-

and-so?" The trumpet immediately says "Yes," and greetings are exchanged. The sitters on this evening were all intelligent people, and gave little away. They all knew that evidence is only of value when volunteered by the "voice."

With an ordinary credulous circle of ecstatic spiritualists the method employed—which has undoubtedly been studied and perfected by a school of professional fraudulent mediums, and which I have only roughly indicated—affords the so-called "medium" the opportunity of continuing banal conversations, during which the sitter supplies all the facts and names, and "Trumpet" has only to answer in the one affirmative: "Yes."

The slight indication I have given of the comparatively incoherent whisperings of the "voice" are used so that "Hen-hen" is often accepted as Henry, Annie, and other names; "Mah-hah" as mother, Marjorie, and numerous others; "Fah-hah" as father, if he is dead, or someone else if he is not. "Jan-jar" is obviously Grandma, Grandpa, or any attempt at a Christian or surname likely to be accepted by one or other of the enthusiastic, if ignorant sitters.

On the evening I am recording, the trumpet, when lifted in the direction of Mrs. Hay, after trying "Hen-hen," eventually arrived at Eileen, but, despite the medium's fishing, the sitter did not give away any points of information, so the "spirit" soon disappeared.

The trumpet, when speaking to Mr. Huskinson, persistently emitted all sorts of sounds until arriving at "Fah-hah"; it eventually got to "father." Mr. Huskinson encouraged the "voice" very admirably, but unfortunately "Fah-hah" did not know how many sons he had, or how many had passed over. Mr. Huskinson volunteered the statement that there were many sons (Mr. Huskinson is one of a family of nine), and then Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, speaking through the trumpet, with my ear close to her face, in answer to the direct question, chanced the reply: "Two of them are on this side." Unfortunately, her guess was wrong. Shortly after this the "voice" vanished.

A thin "voice" then spoke through the trumpet to Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry, and after trying "Jan-jar" managed to arrive at "Grandma." Miss Neilson-Terry encouraged the "voice" to talk, and, naturally desiring evidence of personality, asked her repeatedly to give her

name. Unfortunately, "Grandma" could not remember her name.

The trumpet was then levelled at Lord Howard de Walden, and Mrs. Murphey-Lydy's muffled whispers in time established "father." She fished about considerably for "John's father," and "William" having been mentioned in the conversation she proceeded to fish about for "William."

I must again repeat that during the whole of the time these "voices" were supposed to be manifesting I was listening to the medium speaking through the trumpet.

The trumpet was levelled next at Mrs. Mortimer Bryans, and a "voice" said "Mah-hah." Mrs. Bryans, who is quite a sophisticated sitter, asked the "voice" to repeat it, and again came "Mah-hah." Mrs. Bryans could not accept this, and then said: "Did you say 'mother'? My mother is alive." Then the "voice" said "Mother's mother." "Mothers' mothers" and "grandmothers" are usually safe. Mrs. Bryans asked for a little more information, and again the "voice" discreetly disappeared.

Later, the trumpet lifted, and another "voice" spoke to Mrs. Bryans in muffled tones, but failed again to obtain leading responses, so promptly gave up the attempt to enlighten us.

Needless to say, not one solitary point of evidence was volunteered; nor could any of the sitters claim any recognition of the alleged "voices."

The conversations only lasted for a short time, and immediately a direct question was asked, demanding a direct reply, no answer was given by the trumpet, and the "voice" maintained a discreet silence.

These alleged personal "spirit voices" did not occupy very much time, and all the gaps were filled in by the elusive "Dr. Green" and by the babyish "voice" of "Sunflower."

Several times during the evening the childish "voice" of "Sunflower" was produced by Mrs. Murphey-Lydy. Such a "voice" was, of course, very easy to impersonate, as any music-hall "child impersonator" of the old school knows. At odd times Mrs. Murphey-Lydy would talk to "Sunflower." She would ask one or two questions, and then proceed to answer them herself through the mouthpiece. She would now and again remark to the sitters: "Well now, did you hear that—

just listen to what she says!" At times I was irresistibly reminded of the ventriloquist and his doll.

Towards the close she produced another alleged "spirit voice," announcing it as her uncle. She then proceeded to carry on quite a long conversation with herself. This she did by putting the trumpet straight up in the air, leaning her head right back, and speaking up towards the ceiling. She would move her mouth away from the mouthpiece, ask a question, and quickly reply to it through the mouthpiece. I was so close to her that I heard every intake of her breath while she was speaking as the alleged "spirit." The conversation was supposed to be on personal matters relating to herself. To the sitters the talk was extremely boring. When the conversation had finished, she said to Count Hamilton: "Well now, what do you think of that?—he hasn't spoken to me for years!"

Among other things, she advised herself (via her uncle) to go to Ireland, and added to Count Hamilton: "Fancy him saying that now—I don't know whether I shall be able to go to Ireland on this trip!" If Mrs. Murphey-Lydy does go to Ireland I am perfectly certain that she will take her uncle with her, and it will be interesting to hear his next arrangements for her tour.

Just before the close of the sitting, after a pause, a "voice" was heard to say: "Herbert's mother." The sound of this "voice" certainly came from a different position to the other "voices"—slightly higher, above my head in the circle, and I had to reply to it from an erect position in my chair; it spoke in a feminine American accent. The "medium" then said to me, "Is your name Herbert?" I replied that it was one of my names. Then in a rather challenging tone she asked: "Can't you speak up to her?"

I said that I could not recognize the tones, at which Count Hamilton interposed, saying, "You can never recognize the tones of a 'spirit voice.'" Such an assertion is absolutely untrue. At genuine "voice" sittings it is often possible to recognize all the inflections and characteristics of an individual "voice."

I then asked the "voice" to tell me when we had last met, and when she had last spoken to me. It could not reply, and certainly I could not accept or encourage this "voice" speaking in an American accent, possessing no knowledge whatever of obvious things which would naturally be retained in the memory.

The "voice" disappeared, and "Dr. Green," alias Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, spoke a few words with my ear adjacent to her mouth, and the sitting ended.

## II

This absurd sitting lasted for two hours, and before it finished I was tired out with the perpetual strain of acute observation, and was frankly anxious for the disgusting farce to terminate.

Towards the end I think that Mrs. Murphey-Lydy had become suspicious of me, especially by the manner in which I answered the "voice" purporting to be "Herbert's mother."

At the close of the sitting the trumpet was heard to fall on the other side, opposite Mrs. Murphey-Lydy. This was the first sound heard of the trumpet, as throughout the evening, after it had been used it was gently placed on the top of the table, which was covered with the soft cloth in order to eliminate the sound.

When the lights were switched on, I went to examine the trumpet, an entirely usual procedure in all investigation of "voice" phenomena. Directly I did so, Mrs. Murphey-Lydy said, in a peculiarly objectionable and angry tone: "Don't you touch my trumpet! I don't allow anybody to do that!" There was moisture at the mouthpiece end. Count Hamilton intervened, and in a very aggressive manner asked me what I was doing. I replied that I was examining it for moisture. Count Hamilton at once said: "Let me tell you that we always put water in the trumpet first"—a peculiarly fatuous remark, for if water had been poured through the trumpet beforehand it would most certainly have dried in two hours in a heated atmosphere.

The "medium" thereupon quickly folded the collapsible trumpet, and placed it in a leather case.

After we had left the British College I informed the other sitters of my discoveries. Although they were not so fortunately situated as myself, and therefore had not the same facilities for observing, several of them said that they felt at the time quite certain that "Dr. Green" was Mrs. Murphey-Lydy speaking, and, of course, with regard to the other "voices," not one solitary point of evidence was given throughout the evening.

To me the whole of the performance was crude and amateurish. It afforded a vivid contrast to the "voice" phenomena which occur at genuine séances, which it is impossible to imitate.

A fee of five guineas was charged for Mrs. Murphey-Lydy's services, which throughout were a most scandalous and degrading series of deceptions. I can affirm that on this evening she was fraudulent from beginning to end, and it is amazing to me that serious complaints regarding her have not hitherto been made to the British College of Psychic Science.

## III

As an illustration of the methods employed by fraudulent trumpet mediums, and the manner in which they can and do manipulate the conversation with credulous and undiscerning spiritualists, take the following example:

TRUMPET (*indistinctly whispering*): Hen-he.

SITTER (*excited at being addressed*): What did you say? I think I know who it is. Try again.

TRUMPET (*feeling a bite*): Hen-he.

SITTER: It sounded like Henry.

TRUMPET (*feeling a bite*): Ssss.

SITTER (*puzzled*): Henry? That's funny. Henry's alive. Do you want to give a message to Henry?

TRUMPET: Ssss.

SITTER: Tell me who it is speaking.

TRUMPET (*very indistinctly*): Harn-he.

SITTER: Who?

TRUMPET: Harn-he Hoo-je.

SITTER (*intensely pleased at having found out*): Auntie Julie?

TRUMPET: Ssss.

SITTER: Oh, Auntie Julie, I'm so glad you got through! How are you?

TRUMPET (*getting more distinct*): Quite well, dear.

SITTER: Are you happy?

TRUMPET: Very happy. We're all happy here.

SITTER: Oh, I'm so glad!

TRUMPET: Can you hear me, dear?

SITTER: Yes, auntie. I can hear you quite well now!

MEDIUM (*intervening and speaking in her own voice*): She's getting stronger. It's difficult for them at first.

SITTER: Have you any message?

TRUMPET: My love, dear.

MEDIUM (*own voice*): Speak up to her. Keep the vibrations going.

SITTER: Is Uncle Leo with you?

TRUMPET: Yes, dear. He's here.

SITTER: Will he speak?

TRUMPET: He says he'll try, dear.

SITTER: Is Grandpa with you?

TRUMPET: Yes, dear.

SITTER: And Aunt Elizabeth?

TRUMPET: Yes, dear. They're all here.

SITTER: How are they?

TRUMPET: They're all happy.

SITTER: Give them my love.

TRUMPET: I will, dear.

SITTER: Do you remember that terrible motor accident Frank Tidmarsh had?

TRUMPET (*sympathetically*): Yes, dear. It was terrible.

SITTER: He died a month afterwards, didn't he?

TRUMPET: Yes, dear. But he's not dead. Passed over.

SITTER: Oh, yes. I'm sorry. Is he all right now?

TRUMPET: Yes, dear, quite all right now.

SITTER: Does he like it on the other side?

TRUMPET: Yes, dear. He's very happy.

SITTER: You passed over about a year before his accident, didn't you?

TRUMPET: Yes, dear. I was waiting for him.

SITTER: Do you remember when Uncle Leo died—I mean, passed over?

TRUMPET: Yes, dear.

SITTER: That was two years before you, wasn't it?

TRUMPET: Yes, dear. I was so glad when I found him waiting to meet me.

SITTER: Can you tell me the date you passed over, auntie?

TRUMPET (*suddenly getting very faint*): Can't speak any more now, dear. Good-bye. Give my love to them all.

SITTER: Good-bye, auntie dear. Thank you so much for coming through. Good-bye.

MEDIUM (*own voice*): She managed to speak for quite a long time, didn't she?

SITTER: I think she was absolutely wonderful!

And so a pleasant evening is spent. All the spirits are very happy; all the sitters are very happy, and, when she receives her five guinea fee, the medium is also very happy.

After a séance such as this the sitter later describes to her friends and relatives the marvellous phenomena. Forgetting the numerous points which she herself has supplied, she proceeds to tell them that her "Aunt Julie" came through, giving her own name and some wonderful evidence. She tells them how "Aunt Julie" had told her all about her husband, Uncle Leo, Grandpa, Aunt Elizabeth, and Frank Tidmarsh, and how she remembered about the terrible motor accident, and had said that she had passed over a year before it took place. Often a few other embellishments are added.

The illustration I have given is not in the least an exaggeration. It is an ordinary occurrence.

It must always be insisted that nothing can be regarded as evidential unless freely volunteered by the "communicating entity," and proved beyond all doubt to be outside the knowledge of the medium.

#### IV

On the following Tuesday, June 9, a meeting was held at the Queen's Hall, London, under the auspices of the Spiritualists' Community and the British College of Psychic Science. It was advertised that Mr. Arthur Ford would lecture on the "Margery" mediumship with lantern slides, and afterwards give public clairvoyance. Also that Mrs. Murphey-Lydy would give a demonstration of "spirits" speaking through the trumpet in full light.

A well-known journalist and spiritualist was in the chair.

The prices charged for admission were 5s., 3s., 2s. and 1s., and several hundred pounds must have been taken on this evening. My secretary called at the Queen's Hall a fortnight before the meeting was to be held, and was then informed that every stall had gone, and that she was fortunate in securing four 5s. seats in the circle, as they also were practically sold out. Several people I know tried to obtain seats, but were unable to do so. With such a demand, I was surprised to find, on arriving at the Queen's Hall, that although there are several

hundred platform or orchestra seats, which are always disposed of at large meetings, none of these was occupied; neither was a large block of the Grand Circle on either side of the platform, and these are, of course, most certainly the best seats for hearing—especially for a demonstration of this kind.

The members of the audience, on entering, were handed numbered tickets, which would entitle them to listen through the trumpet if their particular number happened to be drawn. About half a dozen were so privileged.

The performance given by Mrs. Murphey-Lydy on this evening was, to my mind, an absolute fiasco. The trumpet on this occasion was a very long aluminium one, measuring from three feet nine inches to four feet.

The medium was not searched beforehand, as unquestionably she should have been, to discover any concealment which might have been on her person. The manner in which she was attired was peculiar, and worthy of description.

Mrs. Murphey-Lydy wore a dress of a flimsy material—possibly of a georgette nature. It consisted of a succession of draperies, folds, pleats and hangings, reaching to within—approximately—three inches of the ground. Attached to the sleeve, from the wrist to the elbow, was a “wing” of about twelve inches in depth, which produced a kimono-like effect. The design of the dress was manufactured in such a way that the whole of the figure was disguised; almost to a point of suggesting hidden deformities.

Over the frock was placed a long coatee, and this was cut in such a manner as to indicate an almost hunchback appearance.

The description of Mrs. Murphey-Lydy given in the Chesterfield Camp pamphlet states:

“With her marvellous demonstration of trumpet-in-the light, the ‘spirit voices’ are so distinct that they can be heard throughout the Church.”

In view of this glowing press-agent material, it was somewhat ludicrous to find that those who went on to the platform to listen to the trumpet were unable to catch what was supposed to be said.

Before giving her demonstration, Mrs. Murphey-Lydy addressed a few words to the audience, and asked those who had drawn numbers to place their ears to the end

of the trumpet, when *they would immediately hear a "voice" respond.* I have had many years of intensive experience with all forms of mediumship, but I have never before heard the assertion made: "You will immediately hear a 'voice' respond." All my experience has shown that it is impossible to turn on the psychic tap at will; especially is this impossible in all the cases of genuine phenomena. If Mrs. Murphey-Lydy were a genuine medium she would unquestionably know this. How can she reconcile this assertion with the considerable *pauses* which take place during her performances in the pitch-black darkness such as the one at which I was present on the previous Friday?

When Mrs. Murphey-Lydy made this ridiculous assertion at the Queen's Hall I anticipated at once the type of performance which followed.

None of the few trumpet listeners appeared to hear anything but a few odd sounds. The "medium" held the broad end of the trumpet while the listener kept his or her ear to the narrow end. During her performance, Mrs. Murphey-Lydy was continually changing her position, sometimes bending down slightly, and, on occasions, switching entirely from right to left. Throughout she talked very much more than any of the listeners, in fact most of the time she was speaking either to the audience or to the listener. At times, when sounds were supposed to be heard in the trumpet, she was usually facing the wide end, to within nine inches of it. Now and again the listener would ask: "What's that? Auntie? Yes. That's quite right," or "Did you say mummie?"

Once or twice the "medium" made an open remark to the listener, who, with ears glued to the other end of the trumpet, would actually think it was the "spirit voice" talking. The "medium" would then say: "Is that your mother?"

After one or two of these pathetic incidents the chairman retired from the platform, but returned a little later, accompanied by a member of the audience. I ascertained later that he was Mr. Denis Dunn, a representative of the *Daily Express*, who desired to hear the "voices," if possible, in close proximity. Certainly none of the audience could hear anything. A listener was on the platform at the time. The chairman leant forward towards the broad end of the trumpet, but heard nothing. Apparently it was not functioning, so he retired behind the "medium."

When a listener appeared to hear a sound, Mr. Dunn

moved towards the trumpet on the medium's left to see if he also could hear anything. He heard *nothing*. The sounds were switched off. When the "medium" saw Mr. Dunn approaching the trumpet she gently pushed him on one side, indicating that he should sit down. She then held out her hand to the chairman who was sitting behind her, asking him to hold it, and indicating that he should hold Mr. Dunn's hand, which was done. This was a quickly thought out piece of "business," as it placed the chairman and Mr. Dunn well away from her and the trumpet.

The chairman after a time got tired of this hand-holding business, and moved his position, thus breaking the chain.

Another listener came forward, and directly he heard a few sounds, he endeavoured to evolve some sort of conversation, which was, of course, unintelligible to the audience. The chairman afterwards asked him whether he had heard anything, and the listener replied in a quiet voice that "it was bad." The chairman at once announced to the audience that the listener said "it was bad."

During the time another listener was on the platform, when apparently some sort of sound was heard, Mrs. Murphey-Lydy asked: "Do you know a 'Mary'?" The listener replied that he knew several. When this same listener apparently heard another sound he remarked: "Couldn't you cough and clear your voice?" The audience laughed, and the listener's "séance" was promptly ended by the "medium." The chairman announced that he regretted the "voices" were not successful, and the meeting closed.

During Mrs. Murphey-Lydy's performance, which lasted for over half an hour, several of the audience walked out.

Despite this poor entertainment, a certain number of the unsophisticated among the audience seemed to be impressed.

The intelligence of the majority of a massed audience is seldom, however, in evidence; that is why it is always simple for the clown to evoke laughter.

There was no semblance whatever of spirituality apparent during the medium's proceedings. The effect produced was merely the boredom of a material and dreary exhibition.

Mrs. Murphey-Lydy was deliberately fraudulent for

two hours in everything she did at the private sitting on June 5. Both the fatuous exhibition on the Friday at the British College of Psychic Science, and the infantile performance given at the Queen's Hall on Tuesday, June 9, could be infinitely improved upon by any amateur ventriloquist or conjurer.

I have stated in my works on psychical research that no professional conjurer could produce the extraordinary mental phenomena which occur at genuine séances, but with regard to Mrs. Murphey-Lydy's attempts on this evening, I assert that the most indifferent conjurer at a second-class provincial music-hall, dressed and draped in such obvious clothing, could produce a performance a thousand times better and ten thousand times more amusing. In mechanical toys, the sounds of "Mama," "Papa," etc., can be produced, and dozens of other such sounds as "Jan-jar," "Mah-hah," "Auntie," "Uncle," "Janie" and "Johnnie." But what such manipulators can never produce are intelligent answers to intelligent questions with a spontaneous volunteering of names, outside the knowledge of the manipulator.

Throughout the whole of the time, when the listener apparently heard sounds in the trumpet, Mrs. Murphey-Lydy, who carried a handkerchief in her hand, periodically passed it from one hand to the other when she was altering her position. When these faint sounds were apparently heard, one could observe the medium squeezing her hand, just as a conjurer does when he is producing his various illusions.

## CHAPTER V

### THE IMPOSITIONS OF MISS HAZEL RIDLEY

*Meaningless squeaks—The medium's curious antics—Pure rubbish—The usual fishing—The methods employed—"Mumble-mumble-mumble"—A farcical performance—Profitable banalities.*

Monday, June 15, 1931.

On this date I had booked a sitting with Miss Hazel Ridley, an American trance medium, at 5 Smith Square, London. Miss Ridley holds her sittings in clear, but subdued, light.

It is alleged that in her form of mediumship she obtains the "independent voices" of the communicants, and that during her sittings a "voice" is heard speaking as apart from her.

The sitters were: Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry, Mrs. Austin Harrison, Mrs. Mortimer Bryans, Mrs. Hay, a French lady and myself.

I was seated next to the medium, so I had ample opportunity of observing her.

The "medium" announced that her "Guide" was an Indian called "Grey Wolf." She went into trance very suddenly. Personally, she did not appear to me to be in any trance condition at all.

"Grey Wolf" said "Good afternoon," and then spoke a few words to us in Miss Ridley's own voice. It must be noted that all the communications were spoken through the mouth of the "medium." There was, however, at frequent intervals, a strange whispering sound which came from the region of the "medium's" mouth, or within close proximity to it.

During the whole of the séance the "medium" was holding her hands together and twisting them about. In her hands she held a handkerchief, which she would always squeeze when strange sounds were emitted. At other times, when the peculiar whistling sounds were made, she would place her right hand fingers under the cuff of her left sleeve and pinch something. Then she would later take her left hand and firmly press her right arm.

The various sounds emitted were supposed to be

"independent voices." These "squeaks" were ludicrous and meaningless, but I wish to make it quite clear that the alleged spirit "voices" which carried on conversations with the sitters were openly produced from the "medium's" mouth.

The communications were supposed to be made by the actual spirit communicant, whispering in his, or her, own tones; that is, the spirit communicant was alleged to have taken control of the medium. All the "voices," however, spoke in exactly the same tones and accents.

The tones used by the medium for "Grey Wolf" were loud and deep.

The sitting, which lasted for an hour and three quarters, was rubbish from beginning to end. The usual flagrant trick of the professional medium in fishing for names was used.

I took fifteen pages of notes, and it is only worth while to give a brief indication in illustration of the methods employed.

Although after the first few minutes it was obvious to me what was likely to take place throughout the sitting, I took care to be agreeable and encouraging in my attitude to the medium.

Here is a rough description taken from my own notes:

MEDIUM: Gert—Gertie—Gertrude—wants Mary.

MRS. AUSTIN HARRISON (*whose name is Marie, asked*): Do you want me?

MEDIUM: Yes. (*Floundering about*) Mother's here.

MRS. HARRISON (*querying—her mother being alive*):

MEDIUM: Mary's mother.

*Mrs. Harrison could not place "Mary's mother," so the "medium" tried something else.*

MEDIUM: Gertie.

*We then asked who Gertie wanted to speak to.*

MEDIUM: Quite young—when she went over.

*None of us could claim a young Gertie who went over.*

MEDIUM: I will open a way for the others.

MEDIUM (*a minute or two later*) (*whispering*): Elizabeth.

*We tried to find out who Elizabeth was, but could not succeed.*

MEDIUM (*again*): Elizabeth. Is Huf-huf here?

Various of the sitters asked: "Who is it you want?" But we could not catch it.

MEDIUM (*again trying*): Hen-huf.

A SITTER: Is it Henry?

*We all tried.*

H.D.B.: Is it Hetty?

MEDIUM (*whispering*): You are getting nearer now.

The "medium" then continued to speak in a loud voice, as "Grey Wolf":

MEDIUM: Talk up—go on—speak up to them.

Several more endeavours were made to get this name. Then the name "Edie" was tried. None of us knew an "Edie."

MEDIUM (*as Grey Wolf*): I am doing my best to help her go ahead. Elizabeth—had cancer and is helping her.

MEDIUM (*later*): Father is here.

SITTER: Which father?

MEDIUM: Mary's father.

SITTER (*French lady*): What is his name?

Nothing came of this. Various sounds were emitted and eventually the French lady gave the name.

FRENCH LADY: Is it Maurice?

MEDIUM (*accepting at once*): Yes.

FRENCH LADY: Talk to me in French.

A few attempts were made by the "medium" to speak some very bad French. The attempt failed utterly.

MEDIUM (*in her own "Grey Wolf" tones*): Do you know who this spirit is?

FRENCH LADY: No.

MEDIUM: Do you know a "Maurice"?

FRENCH LADY: Yes—but he is alive.

The medium gave it up.

MEDIUM (*later*) (*whispering*): Anne—Annie.

I gave the other sitters an opportunity of claiming "Annie." This, however, nobody did, so I continued (*the sitting had been booked in my name*):

MEDIUM: Annie.

H.D.B.: Yes.

MEDIUM: Herbert.

Knowing the medium must know of me and my relations I continued the conversation in a very agreeable manner.

H.D.B.: Will you tell me, Annie, when I last spoke to you?

MEDIUM: In your own room.

H.D.B.: Who was there?

MEDIUM: George. You will soon be talking to Bert again.

*All this, of course, is obvious, on account of the George Valiantine sittings and "Bert Everett."*

H.D.B.: Have you anything to tell me about George?

MEDIUM: He is all turned about.

H.D.B.: Now, you must know of this. I particularly want to ask you what you can tell me about the imprints.

MEDIUM: Go on with the imprints.

*This was particularly funny, as will be seen by later chapters in this book, containing incidents which occurred before this sitting.*

H.D.B.: Now, please try and give me a little more information. It is quite important.

Medium made no answer.

H.D.B.: Will you tell me what you meant when you said: "Be careful."

MEDIUM: I was referring to your own sittings.

*An obvious guess and absolutely nonsense.*

H.D.B.: No. That is not quite right. I do not think you could have meant that.

MEDIUM: I was referring to the letter.

H.D.B.: No. I am sorry, but I don't think so.

MEDIUM: You mean the scroll?

H.D.B.: I am awfully sorry, but I don't know anything about a scroll.

MEDIUM: Put it down—you will know later on.

*That ended all that.*

MEDIUM (*still whispering as "Annie"*): I must go now. I will get someone else through.

The medium then floundered about with a few sounds and evidently got something which sounded like Ellen.

MISS NEILSON-TERRY: Is it for me?

MEDIUM (*chancing her arm or mouth*): No.

No one else claimed "Ellen" and the medium then tried various other names. It must be remembered all the time that these were supposed to be spirits controlling the medium, and speaking through her organs.

As this sitting was arranged in my name, the "medium," of course, knew none of the other sitters present. In fact, I had not invited anybody to come with me until the last moment.

The sitting painfully continued its course.

MEDIUM: I want to know if Humph-humph is here.

Everyone asked "Who?" on five or six occasions, but we could not get the name. Then:

VARIOUS SITTERS: Who is it you want?

MEDIUM: Can't you hear me?

H.D.B. (*in beatific tones*): Yes. I can hear you quite distinctly. We can hear you say 'I want to know is Humph-humph here?' But we can't quite make out who 'Humph-humph' is. If you can say 'I want to know' so plainly, why can't you manage to pronounce the name?

However, we eventually arrived at "Hunk-ble." This obtained a response from one of the sitters.

SITTER: Is it Uncle Bill?

MEDIUM: Yes. (*Then she quite plainly pronounced*) Uncle Bill.

It was marvellous how plainly "Uncle Bill" spoke upon receiving recognition.

MEDIUM: Uncle Bill. How are you?

The sitter who claimed Uncle Bill did not happen to be on intimate terms with him and the conversation flagged.

MEDIUM (*as "Uncle Bill"*): There are others here.

The sitter asked if "Uncle Bill" had any particular message he would like to give, and "Uncle Bill" replied: "Why don't you work out your own ideas?"

"Uncle Bill" was asked when he passed over. Unfortunately, he did not trouble about such trifles.

The fishing continued.

To Mrs. Hay, some reference to "Peter" was made. These references to "Peter" were not apt. The message for him was that he was always going on and going on with his work.

MEDIUM (*speaking as an alleged spirit*): How is Hen-hap going on?

We all asked "Who?" And some suggested names.

The "medium," then having several names given to her, said quite brilliantly: "Don't give me names."

One of the sitters, however, gave the name "Denny."

At each name volunteered by a sitter the "medium" gave a "Ha—ha—ha" laugh.

She told us that the "spirit" could not talk until the name was given.

MEDIUM (*speaking, of course, as "Denny"*): Now I feel better.

SITTER: When did you pass over?

"Denny" didn't know. Unfortunately death is so insignificant that the "passing over" is forgotten by "spirits" as quickly as the swallowing of a cocktail.

MEDIUM: It is so difficult to remember dates. I passed over with complications. Was it a long time ago?

SITTER: No.

MEDIUM: It seems like it.

(Personally I (H.D.B.) trust that I shall pass over with complications. It seems such an easy, indefinable passage.)

Another alleged spirit speaking through the mouth of the medium talked about a ring. Nobody knew anything about a ring. Then the "spirit" talked about an ear-ring. None of us knew anything about ear-rings.

The medium then tried to talk to Mrs. Mortimer Bryans. Eventually we arrived at the name of "George." Unfortunately Mrs. Bryans could not place George.

MEDIUM: Uncle George.

MRS. BRYANS (*who is a very experienced sitter*): Is it on my mother's or father's side?

MEDIUM: Huf-huf.

MRS. BRYANS: Can you give the full name?

MEDIUM: George Huf-huf.

MRS. BRYANS: I can't quite catch it. Perhaps it is my great-uncle.

MEDIUM (*taking it up quickly*): He lives somewhere in the south-west.

MRS. BRYANS: I don't know him very well.

*This failed.*

MEDIUM (*in her own deep and loud tones*): Dr. Gaylord—I am one of the medium's "Guides."

H.D.B. (*very pleasantly*): Are you of the eighteenth century?

MEDIUM: I passed over sixty-seven years ago.

This was beautifully safe. This "spirit" possessed a magnificent memory for dates. Unfortunately, however, although I was by far the eldest of the party, even I had no recollection of the Gaylords of mid-Victorian era.

All the time these "entities," or perhaps one should say "non-entities," were whispering, the "medium" was always tapping her arms and squeezing her hands, and messing about with her body.

The "medium" then brought through a "John." Nothing happened. Then "Uncle John." "Perhaps on the mother's side."

Mrs. Harrison said that she could accept an "Uncle John." The "medium" fished about and eventually Mrs. Harrison gave the name "Medore."

MEDIUM: Tell Medore I want her. Papa is here. Aunt Mary's here.

Nothing happened over this. Mrs. Bryans was then again addressed.

We all asked who the "voice" wanted to speak to. Eventually it arrived at something like "Sarah."

MRS. BRYANS: Is it a man or a woman?

MEDIUM: A lady.

MRS. BRYANS: Is the name Clara?

MEDIUM: Is that your name?

MRS. BRYANS: No.

MEDIUM: Is it Grannie?

MRS. BRYANS: It might be my grannie, but if so can she give her name?

*Medium didn't know.*

*Another attempt was made.*

MEDIUM: Nebby wants to speak.

ALL SITTERS: Who?

MEDIUM: Nobby wants to speak to you.

H.D.B.: Is it Nifty wants to speak to us?

MEDIUM (*as Grey Wolf*): We want to find out. We are trying to get the name through.

*Eventually we arrived at "Emmy."*

Mrs. Bryans happened to have known an Emmie casually.

MRS. BRYANS: What does Emmie want to say?

MEDIUM: What did you do with the picture?

*This conveyed nothing.*

After this the "medium" commenced to put her fingers up her sleeve, and each time she did so comic little sounds were made, but the brake was eventually put on when she affectionately patted her right arm.

Mrs. Austin Harrison had given the name of Medore, so later a voice came through whispering "Medore."

I think perhaps it is necessary here to interpolate that the late Austin Harrison was one of my very best friends. A fine writer and founder of the *English Review*. Marie Harrison is now genuinely interested in psychics. She is a very intelligent woman and has studied the subject sincerely and carefully. She is in no way sceptical, since she has already received certain definite and evidential points. Naturally, she desires the evidence to be volunteered. Quite rightly she always evades the fatal habit of giving leads.

One of the whispering "voices," after several attempts, eventually arrived at "Ren." Mrs. Harrison, who was seated next to me, remarked in audible tones, "Ren was Austin's brother." The "medium" went on talking

and said, when the name "Medore" was given, that "Medore" was there. This did not produce any response, so then:

MEDIUM: Osten is here—Osten.

Mrs. Harrison would, of course, know how to obtain good evidence from Austin. So also should I. But unfortunately, after the "medium" had announced that "Osten is here," she made no further statement.

The name "Austin" was picked up from Mrs. Harrison's remark that "Ren was Austin's brother."

"Osten" disappeared. *This was very inconsiderate of "Osten," because the one person that "Austin" would be most anxious to communicate with was Marie.*

MEDIUM (*whispering*): Onnie.

FRENCH LADY: Yes.

MEDIUM (*trying French*): Annie—Onri, Ondrey.

FRENCH LADY: André?

*This, in the French lady's quick delivery, might have sounded to the "medium" like any of the three names she volunteered.*

MEDIUM: Leon—Leon.

FRENCH LADY (*with a French accent*): You mean Lyons?

MEDIUM: Yes—the water.

*Nothing was arrived at from the water.*

MEDIUM: She says—

FRENCH LADY: *She* says?

MEDIUM: Mumble—mumble—mumble.

FRENCH LADY: What does she say?

MEDIUM: She says, "Mumble, mumble, mumble." Can't you hear what she says?

FRENCH LADY: No, I can't hear. André is a "he."

H.D.B. (*to medium*): I thought I heard you say "she."

MEDIUM: No—no.

"Grey Wolf" then, very determinedly, said "he."

*I passed the trifling point of sex and the conversation continued.*

MEDIUM: There is a château.

PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY (*helping*): Do they sit there?

MEDIUM: André says, "All right, go on."

FRENCH LADY: What do they do in Lyons?

MEDIUM: They dance.

FRENCH LADY: That is right. Can you tell me any more?

MEDIUM: Yes. Tell "Odeon."

FRENCH LADY: I think I know. Do you mean Grodian?

MEDIUM: Yes—Grodian—the “spirit” says “So happy.”

*The French lady said it got near the name when “Odeon” was volunteered, but she did not know whether it was “Claudian” or not speaking.*

MEDIUM: Phyllis.

PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY: Yes.

Medium, after a few sounds which suggested “Ellen.”

PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY: Is it Ellen?

This sounded slightly promising on account of her relationship to Ellen Terry. With the exception of myself, the sitters were anonymous, and the “medium” may not have known Miss Neilson-Terry.

MEDIUM: Yes.

PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY: Is it a relative?

MEDIUM: No, not a relative. Ellen—Helen—Helen.

PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY: Helen?

MEDIUM: Yes. Not related.

PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY: Can she give me her further name?

MEDIUM: Helen (*fishing*) Bradding—Brudding—Brooding.

H.D.B. (*in a kindly endeavour to help*): Is it Helen Breeding?

MEDIUM: That is nearer to it.

After this the “spirit” said “Good-bye” and “Grey Wolf” stated that the power was going and the sitting was ended.

The “medium” came out of her trance with very efficient rapidity. I asked her how many sittings she was able to hold in a day, and she told me naïvely that before this particular sitting had taken place at 3 o’clock, she had held three others with single sitters which occupied three quarters of an hour each.

I had paid four guineas for my afternoon’s entertainment. The so-called “communications” were farcical.

These American “mediums,” with the rapidity of their race, do not waste time. On this occasion I had paid four guineas, and the fees charged for Miss Ridley for the previous sittings during the day would, at a minimum, amount to another three guineas. Therefore, the amount earned during a week by her fishing banalities would mean a very considerable sum.

Miss Hazel Ridley has been described in certain psychic journals, and by certain ignorant sitters, as a "direct-voice medium." She is nothing of the kind. In "Direct-voice," and/or "Independent-voice," mediumship the voice emanates entirely apart from and away from the medium, and *never* through the medium's vocal organs. By falsely calling herself a "direct-voice" medium, since this form of mediumship is somewhat rare, Miss Ridley is able to charge the credulous higher fees than she could if she posed as a clairvoyant medium.

As for the silly "squeaks" and futile "noises" which were emitted now and again from the region of her throat and chest, a child could reproduce these. What they were intended to convey God and Miss Ridley alone know. A spontaneous stomach rumbling would be just as intelligent, and perhaps more amusing.

The few published accounts that I have read of her séances are so vague and lacking in evidence that they entirely fail to impress any scientific mind. Whether Miss Ridley possesses any vestige of mediumistic power I do not know, but I can definitely assert that during the afternoon on which I sat with her no genuine powers of any description were exhibited. The only cleverness she displayed was an alertness to pick up points, but when evidential questions were put by any of the sitters of the party which I had invited, the "medium" or "the control" or the so-called "spirits," whichever you like, definitely lied when answers were given.

We may be living in a world of fools, but it would be appalling to contemplate a perpetual existence in association with discarnate fools.

## BOOK V

### VALIANTINE'S FINAL VISIT, 1931

#### CHAPTER I

##### VALIANTINE'S ARRIVAL

*Valiantine visits Mr. X—The previous arrangements—Valiantine's mentality—His origin—His character—Beginnings—Unused to luxury—Previous financial arrangements—Earlier visits—Growing fame—Big offers—A generous patron—Growing conceit—"A million pounds"—Mrs. Valiantine—Huge fees—Treated en prince—Effects of flattery and luxury—Arrangements with Dr. Vivian—Valiantine's illiterate letters—Cavalier behaviour—Experiments for finger-prints—Books his passage earlier—Curtails sittings—Cashes Dr. Vivian's cheque—The 1925 sittings for finger-prints—Imprints obtained—Valiantine at the pinnacle of his mediumistic powers.*

##### I

GEORGE VALIANTINE made his last, and probably final, visit to England in 1931.

He arrived at Southampton on January 19, and was there met by a gentleman whom I consider it desirable to refer to throughout as Mr. X.

The arrangements which had been made were that Valiantine was to spend a month at the country house of Mr. X and that he would then come to me at Dorincourt for a short period, during which a series of sittings, held with a specific purpose, would take place, after which he would hold a further series of sittings with Dr. Vivian.

Before I discuss the arrangements which had been made, it is essential that I should remark on certain phases in the development of Valiantine's mentality.

In my records I have, as a rule, understated the remarkable phenomena that have occurred under Valiantine's mediumship.

With the intensive experience of eight years' study, the various phenomena recorded tend to prove that he is, or was, one of the greatest mediums in the world. When I first met him he was a simple, kindly type of

man. He was extremely modest and quiet in his manner, and was conducting a small business as a razor-hone manufacturer in a small American town.

Later, his mediumistic powers brought him considerable fame, and although he did not make any definite charges for his services, he usually received considerable gifts of money, so that he eventually gave up his business and relied upon such gifts to provide his livelihood. Hence he became in time a professional medium.

Knowing Valiantine so well during the last eight years, I have observed his character and mentality gradually change. He had never been used to the handling of much money, nor the luxuries which money can command, and the simple and unaffected man gradually developed traces of conceit and arrogance. Money is so often apt to spoil, and it spoils those who have not been used to it much more than it does those who happen to have been born with it.

On those of his visits to England for which I was personally responsible, I always looked after the financial side for him.

He would never ask for any specific sum. He was always content to leave that side to me, knowing that I had always treated him fairly.

His first visit to London was arranged by me, in conjunction with Mr. Joseph De Wyckoff. This was in 1924, when Valiantine was a comparatively poor man. He was amazed with his first trip on an Atlantic liner and delighted by his entertainment in this country.

Mr. De Wyckoff and I halved his travelling expenses, which amounted to about £150, and he was entertained as a guest in my house during the whole of his stay of five weeks, from February 1 until March 5, 1924. During this time an exceptionally successful series of sittings was held and, sharing again with Mr. De Wyckoff, we made him a present of £75 for his services, which, at that time, he considered more than ample.

On subsequent visits I defrayed his expenses when visiting this country, and would send him a cheque for his return fare and other expenses. He travelled always on one of the best and most luxurious Atlantic liners, and in addition to expenses, as he was then living a more extravagant life, a present was made to him of about £200.

As he became more and more famous, when he visited this country he usually stayed with me at Dorincourt,

although he often received many big offers for his services elsewhere. One man, whom I knew personally, offered him £300 for six sittings. I did not allow Valiantine to accept this offer because I detested the idea of mediumship being placed upon a definite commercial basis.

On the last occasion he came to this country, prior to the 1931 visit, Valiantine brought with him his wife, and seemed decidedly changed in his outlook on life. He had meanwhile received large sums of money from wealthy patrons.

On this occasion I did not send Valiantine a cheque for his passage as he was only staying with me for a few days. I was not conducting a series of sittings at Dorincourt, and I knew that he would be treated in an exceptionally generous manner by Mr. X, with whom he had arranged to spend a month or so. My expenses had been so heavy in connection with his previous visits that I had no intention whatever of making a contribution on this occasion. Valiantine, however, appeared to take it for granted that I should do so. His manner seemed to me to have become hardened and materialistic. He spoke in a somewhat conceited manner, and certainly had very decided views as to the monetary value of his services. He remarked to me casually that some people would pay a million pounds for such privileges. He apparently disregarded the fact that the translated publications of my psychic books in most of the European countries were largely responsible for his having become internationally famous.

He was most passionately devoted to his wife—a woman a few years his junior—and when they visited England together he lavished every attention on her. She brought with her far more clothes than the majority of women travel with, many of which she had never worn, and she took back with her considerably more. She possessed, I should imagine, a wardrobe equal in size to that of a society beauty's. Valiantine's devotion to his wife is to his credit, and at this time he certainly had the means to gratify her wishes.

He told me that for four weeks' mediumistic services at Mr. X's house he received the sum of £1,500, in addition to his double travelling expenses—which amounted to a few more hundreds.

The receipt of such fees, amounting to over £400 a week, gave him, I think, an exaggerated idea of his own importance.

During the time of his visits to Mr. X he was fussed over and treated as a Royal Prince. If he sat in a chair a servant was always in attendance to place a foot-stool before him and cushions at the back of his head.

There can be but little doubt that the rapid accumulation of money did not have a beneficial effect upon Valiantine's character. As a man, I think it ruined him.

For the last few years, wherever he has gone he has, on most occasions, been treated with the attention and flattery which is usually bestowed on a great artist or a genius.

## II

In September of 1930, Dr. Vivian, a lady doctor with considerable experience in psychical research, wrote to me asking me whether Valiantine could be induced to pay a visit to England. Dr. Vivian stated that she was anxious to hold a short series of about twelve sittings, and that her sitters would consist of a small, confined circle; chiefly doctors who were anxious to study psychical phenomena. She assured me that her circle would be an agreeable and harmonious one, and that Valiantine would be made very comfortable during his fortnight or so's stay. She offered to pay Valiantine the sum of £200 for his services.

As I wished to hold a short series of sittings with Valiantine myself, I wrote to him to his home in Williamsport, U.S.A., and told him of Dr. Vivian's offer. I made no mention of any amount that I myself should pay him for his services, as I had never mentioned any specific sum in connection with myself on any previous occasion. He was, however, sufficiently acquainted with the way in which I had treated him in the past to know that he would be fairly well looked after.

Valiantine replied to me in a letter dated September 21, saying :

"If I can arrange with 'Mr. X' I shall be glad to come. Kindly let me know the amount of time you want, and also Dr. Vivian, so I can let 'Mr. X' have the amount of time he wants. If I can make no arrangements with 'Mr. X' it would not pay me to come over for £200 if I must pay my expenses. Jan. or Feb. is

quite alright. I will come alone, as Bess must stay home as father is not well.

"Kind regards to you and the family.

"Very sincerely,

"(Signed) GEORGE."

I quote this letter exactly as it is written, because I have received innumerable letters from Valiantine during the past eight years, all of which have been illiterately expressed. They contain many wrongly spelled words and ungrammatical sentences. I am not quoting this fact against Valiantine. He is poorly educated, and a comparatively illiterate man. This, of course, I know, not merely by his letters, but by personal and close association with him extending over a very long period. I underline this statement very carefully—and it is confirmed by all who have met him—because during the innumerable sittings held under Valiantine's mediumship communications of knowledge and culture have been given in perfect expression and language.

When I received Valiantine's letter, stating that it would not pay him to come over for £200, knowing, as he did, that in addition I should probably pay his expenses, I was somewhat surprised. I deliberately refrained from making a definite offer of money from myself and, among other things, in a further letter I said:

"Fares on the big liners are very expensive, but many of my personal friends are travelling on very good boats with very good living for £30. Therefore, your fare and expenses (as you will be living with me at Dorincourt, and at Dr. Vivian's in Hampshire) would not amount to more than £80. This would leave you a net profit to yourself of £120."

I added in my letter:

"I think you should not consider whether it would pay you to come over for £200, but whether, in view of everything that has been done for you in the past, you should not make this sacrifice of your time."

Now Valiantine knew that, had he come to England on these terms, I should certainly have helped him as I have done on previous occasions, and that he would

be certain to return to America with a net profit of at least £200 for his few weeks' visit.

He had, however, by this time acquired extravagant ideas and tastes, and to him £200 probably represented an insignificant figure. In actual figures it represented at least £60 per week for his services, but this method of reckoning he regarded as negligible.

Valiantine wrote to me on October 14, 1930, as follows (I quote again verbatim from his letter):

" I have heard from Mr. X and he wants me over in Jan. for one month, so I will give him the first month on arrival of which will start on Jan. 18th. I could not leave here until Jan. 11th. I will run over to London and see you in a few days after my arrival. . . . After I leave 'Mr. X' I will come to you and we will talk things over when I arrive. I can go to 'Dr. Vivian' when you get through with me. Hoping this is satisfactory with you."

It should be noted that Valiantine, having arranged to visit "Mr. X," for the first month felt perfectly secure regarding the financial side, knowing that he would probably receive from Mr. X a large sum of money. Unless he had succeeded in making this arrangement with Mr. X he would certainly not have considered it worth his while to come to Dorincourt or to Dr. Vivian.

After the letter which Valiantine wrote to me in October I heard not another word from him until he had arrived in England, although I wrote to him on December 18, naturally expecting him to confirm the dates. The note I then received from him was short and curt, saying:

"January 20, 1931.

" Just a line to let you know that I have arrived. Mr. X and myself are motoring into London a week from Saturday, and are staying in London until Monday. I shall see you then."

Despite the abruptness of this curt note, I wrote him an extremely nice letter in reply, saying:

" If it fits in with Mr. X's arrangements will you and he come to lunch or dinner at Dorincourt—whichever day suits you best."

I received another very short note from him as follows:

"I will be in London Sat. and lunch with you. I do not think Mr. X will as he has some important business to attend to."

On the Saturday morning he rang me up from London saying that he expected to lunch with me in London. I told him that I had work to do at Dorincourt which I could not leave, and I had to send my car to London to fetch him.

When he arrived I asked him how long he would be able to stay with me after he had left Mr. X, and we arranged that he should stay with me at least a fortnight.

Some six months previously, I had written him a letter saying that on his next visit to Dorincourt I desired to experiment to see if it were possible to obtain some finger-prints, especially as under his mediumship we had previously obtained some supernormal imprints at two of the sittings.

I also told him that during the last year or so four famous men whom I knew had died, three of whom were close personal friends of mine. I mentioned that we were arranging six evenings especially for these experiments, and that I thought it advisable to make the circle of sitters exactly the same; also that the original right and left hand imprints of all these four men were fortunately in the possession of Mr. Noel Jaquin. I added that if we obtained these imprints, and they compared favourably with the originals, it would be of the utmost value scientifically.

In view of these experiments, and the one or two other personal sittings which I wished to hold, I told him that the minimum period in which we could get through would be a fortnight. To this he agreed.

Although Valiantine was very agreeable in his manner to me, he somehow conveyed the impression that he was so comfortable and content staying with Mr. X, that he had no particular desire to visit elsewhere. I observed that if he spent a fortnight with me, the series with Dr. Vivian would occupy a little over three weeks more. He then made a remark which did not entirely please me; he said that he wished he had not consented to give a series to Dr. Vivian, and implied that the amount he was to receive from her of £200 made it hardly worth while.

When he left me, however, we had definitely arranged

that he should come to Dorincourt on February 19, and spend a fortnight or so, and that he would then go on to stay with Dr. Vivian. He told me that after this he would go back to stay with Mr. X for a day or so before he sailed from Southampton.

It was clearly defined that the minimum period of time required by Dr. Vivian and myself would be something over five weeks.

A fortnight or so after Valiantine had lunched with me, he motored over from Mr. X to see Dr. Vivian in Hampshire. This was the first occasion on which he had met her. He told her that he was coming to me on February 19 to stay for two weeks, and that he had booked his passage back to America on March 18.

Dr. Vivian wrote to me at once, saying how surprised she was at Valiantine's decision. She said that he appeared to be very off-hand in his manner, and that he was apparently determined to sail on this particular date, because, as he said, he desired to get back to his wife. She told me that it was extremely awkward for her, as she had made all her arrangements for a series of twelve sittings with her fellow-doctors, which could not now take place, as it was evident that he would not have the time to give them. Her letter to me continued:

"*Re* the financial aspect. I asked Mr. Valiantine what I was to pay him, thinking that perhaps as he seems to intend giving me only six or seven sittings instead of twelve he would say that under the circumstances he would be satisfied if I paid him £150. But he said that he must leave that to me, so I felt I must at any rate keep my promise, though I admit I am disappointed. It is a large sum to me, and I have been looking forward so much to these sittings, and to have them suddenly curtailed is disappointing, especially as the only reason Valiantine gives is that he does not wish to disappoint his wife. However, I still hope that you may be successful in inducing him to disappoint her for another week or two."

Dr. Vivian then told me that she had given Valiantine a cheque for £200. This cheque was cashed a little later by Valiantine, and I thought at the time that it was rather unwise of Dr. Vivian to give this sum beforehand, especially as he appeared to be determined to curtail her sittings.

On receiving Dr. Vivian's letter I wrote at once to Valiantine, saying:

"I was very surprised to receive a letter from Dr. Vivian this morning saying that you had motored over to see her and told her that you wished to sail back on March 18. It was definitely arranged with Dr. Vivian that she should have twelve sittings, for which she would pay you £200."

I pointed out to him that it would be impossible to fulfil his engagement with Dr. Vivian and, at the same time, to give me the necessary fortnight for my own series of experiments. In my letter I added:

"You knew long before you came over exactly the arrangements I had made, and, therefore, it was for you to estimate how long you would be over here with Dr. Vivian and myself.

"When you told me the date upon which you were free to come to me I made my arrangements accordingly, and it is utterly impossible for me to alter them. You must see that the very earliest possible date in which we can get through with the arrangements would be March 25."

I told Valiantine that Dr. Vivian must have her twelve sittings, as she had reckoned on this for a very long time and had paid him £200. He replied to me, saying:

"You shall have your fortnight. Also Dr. Vivian will get her share of sittings. She knows how many she expects to have, so don't worry about her end of the matter."

Despite this, however, as I discovered afterwards, Valiantine booked his passage for March 18 before he came to me at Dorincourt. He was evidently determined to go back to America on this date, and nothing would alter his decision.

I have dealt with all these preliminary arrangements because, commonplace as they may appear, they have considerable psychological interest in view of what happened later.

## III

Valiantine arrived at Dorincourt on Friday afternoon, February 19. It is necessary to refer specifically to the purpose I had in view for the series of experiments I wished to make under his mediumship.

When Valiantine was in England in 1925, when discussing with Mr. Noel Jaquin the phenomena of materialized hands, which occasionally touch sitters during séances, he suggested that if spirit hands touched various of the sitters, then these hands could be placed upon smoked paper and an imprint could be obtained.

Mr. Jaquin prepared two sheets of smoked paper, nailed them in a box, and asked me whether I would experiment by placing it in the circle one evening.

The first experiment was made on April 18, 1925, with only Mrs. Bradley, Valiantine and myself present. At the end of the séance, when the lights were turned on, it was discovered that on one sheet there was the imprint of a hand with four fingers and also part of the thumb. On the other sheet there was the imprint of the two feet of a bird. Now, these two imprints (illustrations of which appear in my book "The Wisdom of the Gods") have never been scientifically explained. They have been studied by many experts, who have not to this day been able to determine how they could have been produced by normal means.

In Mr. Noel Jaquin's report, he stated:

"On Tuesday, April 21, 1925, I went down to Dorincourt to examine the imprints. I then took imprints of the hands of Mr. and Mrs. Bradley and Valiantine, but there was no resemblance between theirs and the spirit hand. In the two imprints obtained there was one baffling point of difference. The imprint of the man's hand was quite clear and devoid of lines, not even the skin ridges were marked, yet in the imprint of the bird's feet there were clearly the cell-like markings of skin. These cell-like formations, both in size and in shape, are those of a small bird. In addition the claw markings are clearly defined."

A short sitting was held later in the evening that Mr. Jaquin made his examinations, at which he, Mrs. Bradley, myself, and Valiantine were present.

This was the first time that Mr. Jaquin had ever sat with Valiantine.

The "voice" of "Dr. Barnett" spoke and discussed these imprints fully with Mr. Jaquin. Mr. Jaquin states:

"I then proceeded to ask one or two questions as to the imprints, and in a very deliberate manner Dr. Barnett concisely answered. Some of these questions and answers were very involved and scientific, and I do not think that anyone without a deal of scientific knowledge could have answered them, certainly not as the doctor replied. He explained that the first imprint, that of the human hand, was an ectoplasmic hand; that is a hand covered or built up of ectoplasm, whereas the imprints of the bird's feet were made by an actual materialized bird held loosely together with ectoplasmic forces. In answer to a question as to the lines in the hand imprint, he explained that at the base of the thumb these were not nerve lines, but were made by the joint of the thumb causing a natural creasing of the ectoplasm. This was a point that I had observed when first examining the imprints, and in this I knew that the answer was correct."

We then arranged that on the following Thursday, April 23, 1925, we would make a further experiment.

At this sitting there were present, in addition to Mr. Jaquin, Mrs. Bradley, myself and Valiantine, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sykes.

At this sitting, in addition to some very remarkable "voice" manifestations, in which evidential communications were volunteered by the "voices," two further imprints were obtained. One, the signature of O. B. Everett, which was of no value, and the other, the delicate imprint of a butterfly.

Regarding the butterfly imprint, no scientific explanation as to how it could have been obtained normally has yet been made.

Mr. Charles Sykes is one of the finest sculptors in England, and is also a fine painter. Many of his works have been exhibited in the Paris Salon and also in the Royal Academy. Mr. Sykes, as a sculptor and painter, would, of course, be the best judge to criticize the production of this butterfly. (Reproductions of these imprints appear in "The Wisdom of the Gods.")

The following is an extract from Mr. Sykes' report:

"When the room was again in full light there were surprises for us on the three sheets of paper in the centre of our circle. On one was inscribed a large signature, another showed a cloudy form, and the third *the distinct imprint of a butterfly* which had evidently been impressed back downwards, and measuring nearly two inches across from tip to tip of its opened wings.

"The imprint of this butterfly bears all the appearance of some roguishness (not roguery; it is much too well defined for that). It is an accomplishment in two extremes, which is shown in the first case by the delicacy in which the smoked surface of the paper has been disturbed by the very soft texture of the wings, and in the second case by the relatively great force expressed by several distinctly embossed impressions of the corners of the wings, the two eyes and the antennæ, which becomes clearly visible while holding the reverse side of this firmly made paper edgeways to the light.

"Someone asked if it would be possible to draw it so well by hand. In full daylight it might be possible to copy it, laboriously, after the lithographic fashion, but to invent it—well, it is too exact.

"It has been suggested that a rubber stamp might render a like effect. A rubber stamp would not be fine enough. It has also been suggested that it might be done by the model of a butterfly made in metal—but where would be the velvety impression of the wing surface?

"It should be mentioned also that there is an obvious drag action, mostly left at the serrated edges of the lower portions of the wings, and a very slight drag at the shoulders and top edges of the upper wings, yet all appears steady at the body, the eyes and the antennæ.

"It is difficult to determine whether this drag was caused on being impressed or released, or by a flutter of the wings only.

"The piece of paper on which the butterfly appeared had been laid upon the soft carpet underneath a leather seated stool which had cross-bars to its four legs. These cross-bars were less than a hand's width from the floor, and close to the cross-bar nearest to my feet was the imprint of the butterfly with its abdomen pointing in *my* direction. This description of its position is made to explain how difficult it would have been to make the

impression with a stamping device, when the cross-bar would have halted the natural action of the hand returning towards the body, which is the direction of the dragged effect. Even if this could have been done, the solid body of the person would have had to pass between me and the illuminated trumpets, and I should have seen the luminant crossed sharply by the passing of the solid form, for during the sitting I had easily been able to notice the shape of one trumpet cutting sharply in front of the glow from its companion on rising from the floor whenever some voice wished to use it."

Mr. Noel Jaquin, in his report, which was afterwards published, states:

"The imprint of the butterfly is most fragile, and it must have lain upside down upon the paper. Had this been done with an actual fly I should have detected the scales from the wings, which come off at the slightest touch. A rubber stamp would have rendered the outline hard, and taken away most of the carbon particles. I asked Mr. Sykes if an artist with the most delicate brush could reproduce a like impression of a fly on smoked paper. His reply was decidedly in the negative. Then, apart from the imprints, there are the voices; no one man could have given such a dramatic display.

"I am convinced that these are supernormal imprints. How they were made we cannot be quite certain. In the matter of the butterfly the opinion of an artist like Mr. Sykes must count before mine."

Naturally, as a hand and finger expert, Mr. Jaquin had to leave the criticism of the delicate impression of the butterfly to Mr. Sykes.

Regarding the ectoplasmic hand imprint, obtained on April 18, 1925, Mr. Jaquin again refers to this in his report, saying:

"I am convinced that had there been trickery I should have detected it in these impressions. The imprint of the hand is not complete, and the thumb was not fully materialized. This Bert Everett knew, as he told me on the Tuesday evening. Since then I have tried to reproduce, by means of kid gloves and rubber, an imprint like the one given on Saturday, but without success. This incomplete thumb is important. The second joint

of the human thumb is generally hollow, and it is very difficult to get it impressed, certainly without the top phalange."

At the time these imprints were obtained, George Valiantine was, in my opinion, at the pinnacle of his mediumistic powers. The various phenomena of all kinds, evidential, mental and physical, which were obtained through his mediumship, were extraordinary.

The remarkable daylight sittings which took place at this period were brilliant both in their supernormality and in the quality of the personal evidence supplied by the communicating "voices," whilst Valiantine's face was under acute observation.

After these "imprint sittings," recorded and scientifically tested by Mr. Sykes and Mr. Jaquin, they both had full daylight sittings with Valiantine, in order to experiment to see if supernormal "voices" could discuss these imprints further. On the day following the séance at which the butterfly imprint was obtained Mr. Sykes was so impressed by the experiment of the previous evening that he was extremely anxious to have the opportunity of hearing the "voices" in daylight. He therefore motored down from London the next morning. I append his account of what took place.

"On Friday, the following morning (April 24, 1925), I had my first experience of a daylight sitting.

"It was twelve forty-five midday, summer time, with sunlight in the room. Mr. Valiantine took for himself a comfortable upholstered chair, resting his elbow upon its soft arm, and, holding the wide end of the trumpet in his left hand, he invited me to put my ear to the narrow end, and to sit in front of him on a leather-seated stool.

"However, I could swivel about on this and see his complete figure.

"In a few seconds there were tappings within the trumpet in ones and twos, and some hilarious rattlings. I made several attempts to find out who was tapping, and then asked if they could speak. I was answered by two taps. I expressed my patience, and very shortly afterwards was addressed by a familiar name. Asking who spoke, I was answered that it was my father. Remembering that his voice had spoken to me on the evening before, saying: 'We are working on the imprint

now, Charley,' I discussed the production of the butterfly impression. My father was an artist, and he explained that the embossed effect was caused by the force from below drawing the butterfly downwards on to the paper, and not by the wet fixative blown on to the paper by Mr. Jaquin. It had been a difficult work. He had been employed, with others, in this production, and they were very pleased with their success. He was very jocular and gay in his manner, and even gave me some tender and fatherly advice, which was just what I deserved, though I am not quite so young as when we last met together at his home.

"He also brought my mother's voice to speak to me. I changed ears on the trumpet, swivelling on the stool, and taking a fresh view of Mr. Valiantine, who was by this time beginning to look tired and pale.

"My mother's voice and manner were characteristic, undemonstrative, but deeply affectionate. Hoped I would come again to speak with her. Wished me to speak to her at my own home. Rejected my suggestion that I might be heavy and loutish in such a case, and begged me to try. Told me what had passed between her most intimate sister and me within the few days just elapsed.

"Mr. Valiantine afterwards showed me the phosphorescent parts of the trumpet—how they had gained in luminosity during the sitting, in contrast with the other trumpet which had not been in use since the night before. I must have been a little tiresome—I had kept the conversation up so long."

*(It is interesting to interpolate here the comparison between the remarkable daylight sittings given by Valiantine with the ludicrous performances which I have witnessed by the alleged medium, Mrs. Murphey-Lydy.)*

Mr. Noel Jaquin spent the night at Dorincourt after the séance at which the imprint of the butterfly was obtained, and on the morning of April 24, 1925, at about 9 o'clock, just before breakfast was served, he also had, quite by chance, a very short daylight experience with Valiantine.

In reference to this, I append a short extract from his report:

"I stayed the night at Dorincourt, and early next morning went into the study with Pat Bradley, aged nine. I asked him to let me have a look at the

trumpet used the night before. I then held it in my right hand, and asked Pat to put his ear to the smaller end. It must be understood that the morning was bright and clear. The sun was streaming into the room, and within two seconds there were distinct raps from the inside of the cone. Just after this Valantine entered the room and I requested him to hold the trumpet while I listened. This he did, holding it at arm's length while I placed my ear to the smaller end. Within three or four seconds there came the whispered greeting from the voice of my brother-in-law, George Gregory. I then asked him why they had not given the imprint of a hand; the reply was indistinct. After a pause he remarked: 'There is the impression of my thumb upon the paper at the lower edge.' Here I should mention that the thumb mark referred to is, like the imprint of the hand, an ectoplasmic impression.

"I then asked George Gregory some personal questions, which were satisfactorily answered.

"It was certainly impossible for Valantine to have answered these questions had he the knowledge with which to reply, as I could see his face the whole of the time, and furthermore, the sound came from *inside* the trumpet."

. . . . .  
It has been necessary for me to dwell at length upon the incidents surrounding the obtaining of these first supernormal imprints. By the relation of these facts, carefully collated, it will be understood that the series of sittings which I had arranged to hold during 1931 might prove of considerable scientific value, either in the proving or the disproving of the supernormality of any imprints which might be obtained during these experiments.

In all my previous psychic works and studies I had hitherto concentrated only upon the value of an accumulation of mental evidence. The mental branch of phenomena has always appealed to me as of infinitely more importance than the physical side.

The series of imprint sittings were devoted to *materialistic* attempts to obtain *physical* phenomena.

Before recording in coldly scientific exactness the details of what transpired, again I must point out that it is necessary to take into consideration the psychological effects of material prosperity and Valantine's apparent change of mentality.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FIRST SÉANCE

*Distinctive types of phenomena—A strong combination of forces—A new type of trumpet—Thirteen "voices" manifest—The characteristic voice of my father—My sister's warning—"Be careful"—Richard Bethell.*

Thursday, February 19, 1931.

VALIANTINE arrived at Dorincourt during the afternoon of Thursday, February 19. The first sitting of the series was held after dinner at about 9 o'clock. There were present: Valiantine, my wife and myself, and it should be noted that each of the sitters is a "voice" medium. On the many occasions when this particular trio has sat, without any other person being present, the results have been invariably successful, and the fluency of the "voices" manifesting has been remarkable.

On certain occasions physical phenomena and also "voice" phenomena of a distinctive nature have occurred at the private sittings held under the mediumship of my wife and myself, when Valiantine has *not* been present, or even in this country. These distinctive phenomena have, later on, taken place similarly while Mrs. Bradley and myself have been sitting under the mediumship of Valiantine.

On one occasion, when Valiantine was visiting England, a family sitting was held, especially in order that Valiantine might observe certain phenomena which *had not occurred under his own mediumship*.

The combination of the three of us, sitting alone, appears to be particularly strong, and I am of opinion that the psychic forces used are provided more or less equally from each of the sitters. At times when this trio has been sitting, and there have been two or three other sitters present, the forces do not appear to be used in the same way, and the bulk of the mediumistic power seems to be provided by Valiantine. This may be accounted for on the assumption that my wife's and my own mediumistic powers are more delicate and sensitive, and less strongly developed than Valiantine's, and therefore are more likely to be affected by the vibrations of

the various sitters and may also at times be rendered impotent.

On this evening a new type of trumpet, or megaphone, was used. It is the best instrument of its kind that I have ever seen, and is the invention of a wealthy English gentleman, who is a student of psychics. The trumpet is made in one piece of red celluloid, measuring about twenty-six inches in height. The top and mouth-piece end measures five-eighths of an inch in diameter; from which it widens to a diameter of seven inches at the circular base, upon which it stands on the floor. It is very light in weight. From the bottom end run seven strips of luminous wire, placed diagonally and rising to a height of sixteen inches. Luminous spots are also placed round the bell end. With any movement whatever the exact direction and angle can therefore be observed instantly and accurately. Another great advantage of this trumpet is that the "voice" speaking from it is much more clear and distinct than when an aluminium trumpet is used. When the "voice" is faint an aluminium trumpet is always liable to give a "tinny" sound to the "voice."

In the course of this first sitting thirteen different and distinct spirit "voices" manifested in all; five of Valiantine's "Guides," and eight individual personal "voices."

No music was played on the gramophone, and within less than one minute the first "voice" greeted us. Thenceforward all the various conversations continued fluently throughout.

Valiantine's "Guides," with the exception of "Pat O'Brien," said very little to us, and most of the time was occupied by the communications from the personal "entities."

The first "voice" to manifest was that of "Bert Everett." After greeting us, he spoke a few short sentences.

I recorded the various "voices" in the exact order in which they manifested. "Bert Everett" spoke independently—without using the trumpet—in his usual shrill tones, coming from high up near the ceiling.

The next "voice" to address us was that of "Dr. Barnett," whose tones, as usual, appeared to come from the floor in the centre of the circle, where the trumpet was placed. I had a short discussion with "Dr. Barnett" regarding the experiments we intended to make

in the endeavour to obtain supernormal imprints, and he remarked: "We will do our best."

Immediately after this the trumpet was lifted and a distinct feminine "voice," coming close to me, said: "Herbert, it's Gert." The name was volunteered in the abbreviation by which she was usually addressed by the family. My sister, Gertrude, died in 1928. Although somewhat faint in tone, the "voice" was quite distinguishable. The conversation which followed was on purely family matters, and answers to questions which were put were made without hesitation. During the time my sister was talking to me, the trumpet several times wafted rapidly from me to my wife, to whom many remarks were also addressed.

Using the luminous trumpet, a strong "voice," addressing me, announced itself as "Dan—Dan Bradley—your father." These are the exact words of his opening sentence. They were delivered in his direct, spontaneous and characteristic manner. A long conversation followed, rapid and fluent, each reply interlapping question, giving abundant evidence of his knowledge of the various events in his life, and his knowledge of the events which have transpired since he passed over. He talked at length with me, with Mrs. Bradley, and with Valiantine; in the same quick manner that he answered my questions he answered theirs. During the time he was talking to the three of us, the trumpet wafted with lightning rapidity from one to the other, and to each he spoke in that spontaneous, vital manner, which was so characteristic of his personality. When he was speaking to Valiantine, the last word of each sentence overlapped those of Valiantine's reply. I was seated on Valiantine's left—my wife on his right. While the "voice" of my father was talking to me the mouthpiece-end of the luminous trumpet could be observed directly opposite and away from Valiantine. Beyond this, and even more important, is the fact that throughout the whole of the conversation every sentence was delivered in the exact tones of his attractive Irish accent. Every intonation was identical with his intonation when alive, as was that peculiar, unmistakable "voice" of his, which could be recognized among a million.

My father's voice was always a very powerful one. He died in 1925, at the age of eighty-seven, and to the end he was a strong and virile man, with an iron con-

stitution. The only ailments he ever suffered from were asthma and hay fever, of which he had occasional attacks for his last fifty years. My father's voice was only affected for a very short period during these attacks. Immediately he recovered from them his voice became as powerful as ever again, and I recollect, when he was considerably over eighty years of age, at a public banquet, hearing him make a speech, when his voice was by far the strongest of all the speakers. At the age of eighty-seven—right until the day of his death—he was a vigorous man, who could walk with ease his ten miles a day. When he was staying with me at Dorincourt, he would dine, play cards, and then endeavour to keep me up talking until 2 or 3 a.m. I was usually the first to become tired, and he would appear at breakfast the following morning in a fresher condition than myself.

In the summer of 1925 my father had an attack of bronchitis. It was not particularly severe, and his heart was still very strong. Two days before he died he said to me, quite cheerfully: "I think I have had enough. I have had a very good innings, and it's time I went. When I die, I don't want any fuss; no flowers, no black clothes, nor any nonsense of that sort." He passed out peacefully in his sleep.

All his life he was a Roman Catholic, but he was the broadest-minded man I have ever met. Despite the very big difference in our ages—I was born late in his life—he and I always talked together as two friends with a mutual understanding rather than as father and son. During the last two years of his life he had an understanding of spirit communication from reading my books, and he would often discuss the subject with me.

While he was talking to me at this Valiantine sitting, among other things he mentioned the names of several of his friends whom he had met on the other side. He told me that he was still enjoying life in his present state, and adding, laughingly: "You know, there is no Purgatory here." Here, I think, he was referring to the ordinary accepted idea of Purgatory. In my opinion the theory of purgatory is logical, in the sense that it denotes a certain mental condition, from which one eventually develops.

Immediately our conversation ended, "Pat O'Brien" spoke, using the luminous trumpet. He said that he had come along with my father and that they were often

together. He spoke with us for a considerable time in his rich Irish brogue, and it was interesting to observe that this Irish accent was totally different and distinctive from the Irish accent—the Galway tinge—of my father.

There was a short pause after Pat O'Brien had gone, and then the trumpet was lifted again. It was at this moment that a most peculiar, and possibly significant, incident occurred. It is necessary here to emphasize the fact that my sister, Annie, has spoken to my wife and myself in the "voice" and has held long conversations with us on innumerable occasions, both under Valiantine's mediumship and also under our own private mediumship. The conversation which ensued on this particular evening was the briefest I have ever held with her. She addressed me in tones which were recognizable immediately. She was extremely agitated, as if endeavouring to give me some urgent warning as quickly as possible. The short conversation was as follows:

ANNIE: Herbert—it's Annie. Be *careful!* Be *careful!*"

I could not understand what was meant by this at the time, and thought perhaps she was referring to my health, as, on account of Valiantine's visit I had previously postponed a very necessary operation on my teeth. So I replied:

H.D.B.: What's the matter, Annie? What do you mean by that?

ANNIE: I can't say any more. Only that you *must* be careful.

The trumpet was then dropped, and she said no more. In view of what transpired at the subsequent sittings during the following week with Valiantine, it is essential here to note that *never once* again did Annie attempt to manifest or speak. It was only later that I discovered that a far more significant interpretation could be placed upon her warning, and that it had no relation whatever to my health. The warning was, in my opinion, given in regard to what might—and did—happen during the ensuing week.

After this incident a few words were spoken to us by two of Valiantine's "Guides," "Hawk Chief," speaking in the independent "voice" from high up in the room, and "Black Foot," in his usual manner from the floor.

Then came the "voice" of Warren Clarke, speaking to us from the luminous trumpet in his distinctly

recognizable tones. He stayed for a short time only, and sent messages to his daughters, Phyllis and Betty.

After he had gone the trumpet was lifted as if with some slight difficulty, and then the gentle "voice" of my mother spoke to me. She spoke with my wife and myself for quite a little time upon family matters, and during the conversation many names were volunteered by her. Her manner of speech was absolutely characteristic.

Then followed the "voice" of my wife's father, George Hunt. He spoke with us for two or three minutes, referring to his wife, who was at that time staying with her daughter in Germany. He volunteered his knowledge of certain events which had taken place in Chemnitz. He spoke of his paintings, and displayed an evidential knowledge of the condition of his wife's health.

My wife's brother—Stanley Hunt—who died a few years ago of meningitis, spoke with her, and, during the conversation, gave evidence of his identity.

Then a "voice" using the luminous trumpet and announcing itself as "Richard Bethell" spoke to me. He said that he wanted to speak to his wife and that he wished me to tell her that he did *not* commit suicide. He told me that he had suddenly felt ill and needed air, so he stood on a chair near the window, became giddy, and fell out.

Immediately after this "voice" had spoken the trumpet was dropped, and there was a pause. I then remarked to my wife that I did not understand what he meant by saying he fell out of the window, as although I had seen accounts of his sudden death in the newspapers, I had not seen it stated that he had fallen out of a window. Immediately after I had remarked this the trumpet was lifted and the "Bethell voice" said to me: "It *was* in the papers."

I knew the Hon. Richard Bethell well. We very often lunched and dined together in town, and he and Mrs. Bethell often visited us at Dorincourt. As is well known, Richard Bethell was one of the excavating party which explored the Tut-anhk-amen tomb. His death was sudden and mysterious. He was staying at the Bath Club when the tragedy happened, and I was under the impression that he had been found dead in bed, but on the morning after the sitting I am describing I ascertained that his death had occurred through falling

from the window, and that this had been disclosed in the papers.

In endeavouring to find out where Mrs. Bethell was staying at the moment, I was put on to a wrong number—I was connected with Lord Bethell of Chelmsford, who is, I believe, no relation whatever of Richard Bethell's family. The butler answered the telephone, and I asked him: "Could you give me Mrs. Richard Bethell's address?" He replied that he was afraid he did not know it, and, strangely enough, added: "You mean the wife of Richard Bethell, who fell out of the window at the Bath Club, don't you?" I asked him how he knew of this, and he told me that he had read it in the papers.

I did not communicate with Mrs. Richard Bethell regarding the message I had received from her husband, because I suddenly became too much occupied with the dramatic events of the sittings which followed.

After the "Bethell voice" the childish feminine tones of "Honey" (another of Valiantine's "Guides") came through and talked with us, and also sang a song in a babyish "voice."

Shortly after this "Dr. Barnett" closed the sitting.

The sitting was a remarkable one; more especially in regard to the various entities which spoke to me and to my wife. They gave an abundance of evidence of their surviving personalities, which it would be impossible for anyone in the world to manufacture, but despite the value of these evidential communications the most dramatic and outstanding communication of all, which remained stamped upon my mind, was the warning of my sister Annie, in staccato tones: "Be careful! Be careful!"

## CHAPTER III

### A FINGER-PRINT EXPERIMENT

*An attempt to obtain supernormal imprints—The preparations—Precautions—A question of evidence—Did Valiantine know?—“Doyle” speaks—Other “voices”—Impression on the smoked paper—“Doyle’s” finger-prints.*

Friday, February 20, 1931.

ON this evening the first of the series intended specifically for experimenting in the endeavour to obtain supernormal imprints was held.

The following were the sitters, whose position in the circle from right to left was as follows: George Valiantine, Mrs. Sykes, Mr. Noel Jaquin, Mrs. Bradley, Mr. Charles Sykes and H. Dennis Bradley. Between myself and Valiantine stood the gramophone, to which I attended throughout. It was placed on a small table.

All the sitters in the circle had sat at the sitting held on April 23, 1925, when, upon smoked paper, an extraordinary impression of a butterfly had been obtained.

The circle was a carefully chosen one, because each of the sitters was experienced, and one could rely on meticulous observation, and also on expert knowledge of imprints.

We all dined together, and immediately prior to the sitting, which began at 8.50 p.m., Mr. Jaquin carefully smoked two sheets of blank foolscap paper. One of these sheets was placed on top of a small, but heavy, old oak coffin stool, and the other on the carpet beneath the stool. The sheet on top of the stool was placed on a blotting pad, measuring  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches by  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The coffin stool has four bars, 2 inches thick, at the bottom between each of the four legs, and standing  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the floor. The four legs are  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches square in thickness. The sheet of smoked paper on the floor was placed underneath two of the legs of the stool.

In order to take every possible precaution I had evolved a method of procedure which would definitely prove that the sheets had no markings whatever upon them before the sitting commenced, and would also render impossible any attempted substitution.

I requested every sitter in the room to sign his or her name in pencil on the edges of each smoked paper, and this method I adopted at all the subsequent sittings. I also asked Mr. Jaquin—as a check—to take notes of all that transpired.

The sitting was, of course, held in darkness, with the exception of the distinct luminosity from the spots on the diagonal wires on the celluloid trumpet.

After this, as is customary at all Valiantine sittings, the medium repeated the Lord's Prayer.

Shortly afterwards the voice of "Dr. Barnett" was heard coming from the centre of the circle on the floor. He gave us the usual greeting, and we then told him that we desired, if possible, to obtain supernormal imprints. "Dr. Barnett" replied: "We shall do our best."

"Dr. Barnett" only spoke a few short sentences, and his "voice" and manner appeared to be a trifle brusque.

There was then quite a considerable pause, after which in high shrill tones the "Bert Everett" voice suddenly called out "Exquisite!"

Shortly after this the luminous trumpet was lifted, and a child-like and girlish "voice" addressed itself to me in agitated and tremulous tones. She said: "Mr. Bradley, it's Hilda." She then went on to say, "I am so worried about my medium; I've just come over to tell you—she is terribly ill." I asked what was the matter with her, and she replied: "Her body is in a terrible condition."

I should mention here that "Hilda" is one of Mrs. Barkell's "Guides." Mrs. Barkell, in addition to her clairvoyant and clairaudient trance sittings, has, during the last year or so, held sittings for the "direct voice." A month or two previously I had attended one of these sittings at Mrs. Barkell's house, and, among other "voices" which spoke, was "Hilda," with whom on two or three occasions I held short conversations. It is interesting to note that the manner of delivery, accent, and intonation of the "Hilda" voice which spoke to me on this evening was identical with that of the "Hilda" voice which spoke to me at Mrs. Barkell's house when Valiantine was *not* present. He was not at that time in this country.

I then asked "Hilda": "Is Mrs. Barkell in bed?" And "Hilda" replied: "Yes." I told her I would telephone in the morning and ask after her.

After the sitting was over, and just before retiring

for the night, I telephoned through to Mrs. Barkell's house. The telephone was answered by Mr. Barkell. I made the excuse of a very ordinary inquiry regarding another matter in reference to Mrs. Barkell, and immediately he said: "I am sorry to say that my wife is very ill indeed, and will not be able to leave her bed for six weeks." He told me that she was suffering from angina. I asked when she had been taken ill, and was informed that she had been suddenly attacked on the previous Wednesday night. It should be mentioned that none of the sitters had any knowledge whatever that Mrs. Barkell was ill. I asked Valiantine whether he had heard of Mrs. Barkell's illness before the sitting and he told me that he had *not*. Now if it had been established that the communications of "Hilda" regarding Mrs. Barkell's serious illness were entirely outside the knowledge of Valiantine, or any of the sitters, this would have proved an extremely valuable point of evidence. It must be recorded, however, that Valiantine knows Mr. and Mrs. Barkell, and had, a few weeks prior to this sitting, attended a séance at Mrs. Barkell's house under her "direct voice" mediumship.

Later on I took the precaution of telephoning to the Barkells, and inquiring whether by any chance they had telephoned or written to Valiantine, telling him of the illness, between the Wednesday night, February 18, and Friday night, February 20. They assured me that they had only met Valiantine on a few occasions, and they were not on such intimate terms that they would consider there was any necessity to do this. Further, that as Mrs. Barkell was dangerously ill at this time, it would be most unlikely for them even to think of such a thing. Mrs. Barkell, however, at once volunteered the statement that it had been arranged for a "voice" sitting to be held at her house under her mediumship on the Thursday, February 19, and that one of the sitters who was to have been present that night was the private secretary of Mr. X. During the afternoon this lady, whom we will call Miss W, had telephoned through and was informed that the sitting could not take place on account of Mrs. Barkell's illness. Mrs. Barkell also told me that either on the Thursday or on the Friday a letter was written to Mr. X informing him of her illness.

Mrs. Barkell, realizing the importance of making certain that the information given was not within the knowledge of Valiantine, was most frank in helping me

to discover any channel through which the information might have been acquired.

Now, since Valiantine had been staying with Mr. X for the entire month prior to his coming to Dorincourt, and since he was in the habit of telephoning through to Mr. X almost daily, I am of the opinion that it is distinctly probable that Valiantine *did* know of Mrs. Barkell's illness before this sitting took place on the Friday evening, in which case this would rule out the extreme value of the evidence. At the same time, one must in fairness repeat that the "Hilda" voice was the same characteristic "voice" which had manifested at Mrs. Barkell's house under her own mediumship.

So far during the sitting which I am recording, the "voices" and communications had been very short. The impression given was that the time was being devoted chiefly to the obtaining of the imprints.

After the voice of "Honey" had spoken there was a considerable pause, during which gramophone records were played, and the sitters talked among themselves.

Valiantine then said that he felt terribly hot, and that the perspiration was rolling off him. He asked me to feel his forehead, which I did. It was certainly soaked in perspiration.

A little later on the luminous trumpet was lifted and, coming across to me, a "voice" speaking in a light and somewhat husky whisper, said, "Bradley—Doyle . . . Arthur Doyle. . . ." After the first sentence or two the distinctness of the "voice" improved, and whilst I am not prepared to say that I could recognize it as Doyle's voice, it nevertheless bore a certain similarity. A short conversation ensued, during which I addressed a few ordinary and non-evidential sentences to this "voice," to which it replied. I asked, among other things, whether he knew of the specific purpose for which we were sitting, and he replied: "I know. I am trying to give an imprint."

The luminous trumpet then went round the circle and greeted my wife, then to Mr. Jaquin, greeting him.

One or two other "voices" spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Sykes, and then a "voice," using the luminous trumpet, addressed Valiantine. The trumpet was at right angles to the medium, the bell-end being roughly about eighteen inches from his face and directed towards him. A few short sentences were spoken. The Doyle "voice" spoke

to Valiantine, saying, "Good evening, Valiantine," to which Valiantine replied immediately, "Good evening, Sir Arthur." Observing acutely, the Doyle "voice" appeared to me to speak from at least three feet away from Valiantine's face and voice, and certainly came from the mouthpiece-end of the luminous trumpet, which was facing Valiantine. As if making a special point of the remark, and to emphasize the point, after the short conversation with Valiantine the Doyle "voice" stated: "This is the first time I have spoken in this way." These words, given in their exactness, are of considerable importance, in view of what transpired later, and also of what was later alleged to have occurred previously.

I then carried on the conversation:

H.D.B.: Doyle, you know the value of evidence; will you try and give me, if possible, some evidence of your identity which is unknown to any of the sitters in this circle?

DOYLE "VOICE": I would prefer to give this evidence to my family.

H.D.B.: Very well. I will invite them here so that you may give the evidence to them.

DOYLE "VOICE": Thank you, Bradley. I want to speak to Jean and Dennis and Mary. I would like to speak to Mary about the book shop.

H.D.B.: I will invite them to come here.

After this the trumpet fell to the ground. Another record was played on the gramophone, after which one word was heard from the "Bert Everett" voice, high up in the ceiling, calling: "Exquisite!"

A further record was played and then the luminous trumpet was lifted again and, addressing me, said: "Bradley . . . Arthur Doyle . . . I shall be able to speak stronger later on." I continued with the conversation:

H.D.B.: I think your "voice" is quite distinct. It is quite easy to hear every word you say.

DOYLE "VOICE": I want to speak to Jean.

H.D.B.: I will bring her here next week.

Shortly after this the luminous trumpet was lifted and a "voice," announcing itself as "his father," addressed Mr. Sykes. This "voice" also greeted Mrs. Sykes, and a short, non-evidential conversation was carried on.

After a further pause, using the luminous trumpet, a distinctly feminine "voice" addressing Mr. Sykes announced itself as "Aunt Hannah." This "voice"

also greeted Mrs. Sykes, and while talking to Mr. Sykes volunteered the statement that it was "his mother." There is a small point of evidential interest which might be noted. The "voice" when first announcing itself did so as "Aunt Hannah." Mr. Sykes's mother, when she was alive, was always known to the family as "Aunt Hannah." During the time this "voice" was speaking to Mr. Sykes, the deep "voice" of one of Valiantine's "Guides," named "Black Foot," was heard speaking from the floor, saying: "Sit up straight, then you'll be able to hear better."

After a pause, the luminous trumpet was lifted and a "voice" announcing itself as "George Gregory" addressed Mr. Jaquin. A very short conversation ensued, during which "George Gregory" told Mr. Jaquin that he would endeavour to help in obtaining a supernormal imprint.

It may here be mentioned that George Gregory was an old school friend and brother-in-law of Mr. Jaquin. On the occasion of Mr. Noel Jaquin's very first experience of the "direct voice" at a séance held at Dorincourt on September 30, 1925, at which were present, in addition to Mr. Jaquin, Mr. and Mrs. Caradoc Evans, Mrs. Bradley, my son, Dennis Anthony, and myself, a "voice" spoke to Mr. Jaquin, volunteering the name of "George Gregory." Mr. Jaquin, in his report of this sitting, which is published on page 40 of "The Wisdom of the Gods," said that he was convinced that it was the "voice" of his brother-in-law talking to him, that no one present in the room knew he had a brother-in-law of that name, and that no one could possibly have imitated the personal traits of precision and general sympathy. It must be emphasized that this sitting was held under the mediumship of my wife and myself, and that *Valiantine was not present*. It was in the following year that Mr. Jaquin first met Valiantine.

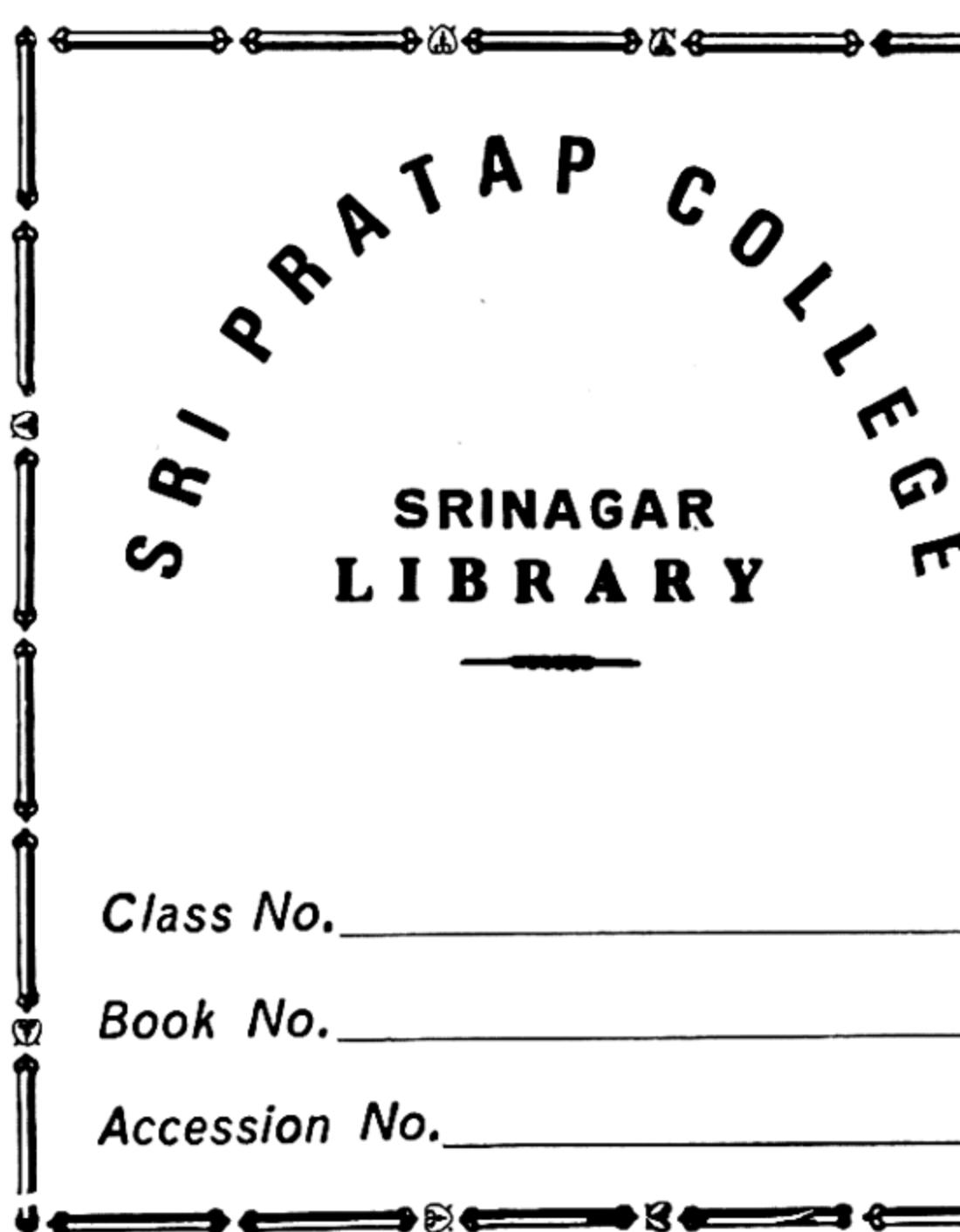
In the intervals of the short conversations with the various "voices," gramophone records were played, and at the expiration of one of these the shrill "voice" of "Bert Everett" was again heard to shout "Exquisite!"

After this, using the luminous trumpet, the "voice" of my father, Dan Bradley, spoke to me and to each of the sitters in turn, including Valiantine. His "voice" was characteristic and recognizable. He had known all the sitters while he was alive, with the exception of Mr. Jaquin. My wife and I discussed matters relating to my

*Exhibit No. 1*

*A photograph of the smoked paper as found and fixed after the séance held at Dorincourt on Friday, February 20, 1931. During this séance a "voice" alleged that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was "trying to get an imprint through."*

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son, Dennis Anthony, who, that day, had sailed for Buenos Aires.

Then followed the "voice" of "Pat O'Brien," who spoke to us in loud clear tones, and, when talking to Mr. Sykes, referred to his father's pictures. (Mr. Sykes's father was also an artist.) When speaking to me he said: "You know, Mr. Bradley, Doyle has been trying to get his imprint through."

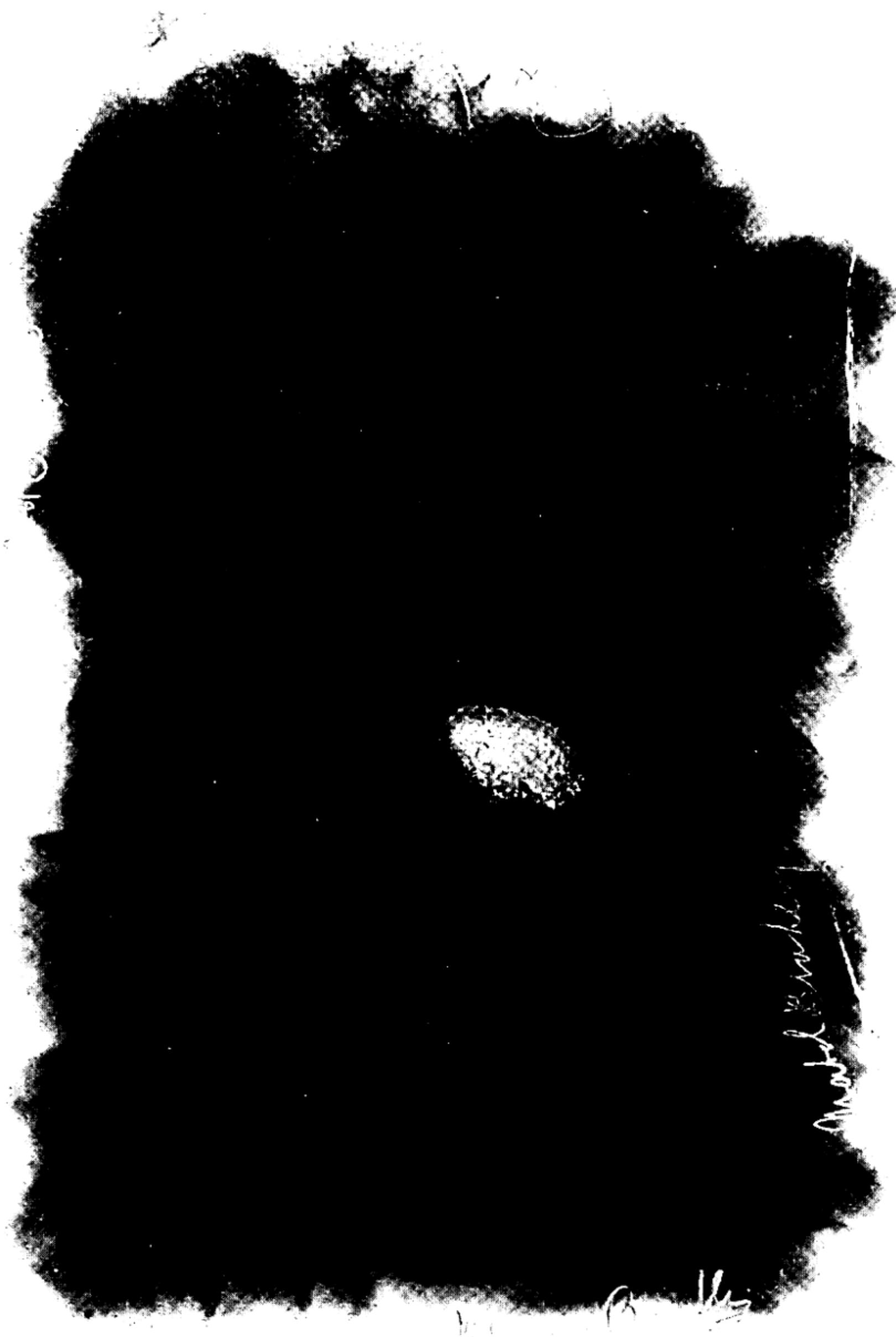
Shortly after this "Dr. Barnett" closed the sitting.

When the lights were switched on it was found that an impression had been made on each of the two sheets of smoked paper. (Exhibits No. 1, page 316, and No. 2, page 318.) I was particular in requesting the sitters not to touch these sheets until they had been fixed by Mr. Jaquin. When the fixing solution had dried, we all examined them, but, beyond the fact that they appeared to be skin imprints, their exact nature could not be ascertained until they had been subjected to analysis. I handed both sheets to Mr. Jaquin, requesting him to take them home with him that night and compare them with the original imprint of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's hand, which he had in his possession.

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PRIMAGAN

*Exhibit No. 2*

*A photograph of the smoked paper placed underneath the stool at the séance on February 20, 1931. The curious indentation may have been caused by uneven pressure.*



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## CHAPTER IV

### MORE IMPRESSIONS MADE

The second attempt—Mr. Jaquin's opinion—More precautions—The tin of modelling wax—Few "voices"—St. John Adcock—"Doyle's voice"—The charm on the watch-chain—Lady Doyle—The spade guinea—Valiantine knew of it—More impressions made on the smoked paper.

Saturday, February 21, 1921.

At about 9 a.m. on the morning of February 21, Mr. Jaquin telephoned me. He told me that he had studied the imprints, and, so far as he could see, they corresponded with Doyle's.

Before I met Valiantine at breakfast, my wife had told him of Mr. Jaquin's message. I noticed that when I discussed the matter with him he did not appear to be particularly elated or impressed.

At 8.45 that evening a second sitting for imprints was held. The circle was the same as on the previous evening, and the sitters were placed in exactly the same position as before, the two signed sheets of smoked paper being placed on top of and underneath the stool. In addition, on this occasion, Mr. Sykes brought with him a small tin box filled with modelling wax, which was placed on the top of the stool, next to the sheet of smoked paper.

During the sitting the "Guide voices" only spoke a very few short sentences. The "Dr. Barnett" voice gave the usual greeting, and, in answer to questions regarding the imprints, said that a lot of force had been used on the previous night, but that they would do their best.

At one period the "Bert Everett" voice interjected the word "Exquisite!" but said little else.

"Pat O'Brien" spoke longer than any of the other "Guides." In answer to a question as to whether they were succeeding in getting further imprints through, he replied that Doyle was trying to do so.

The "Pat O'Brien voice" spoke to each of the sitters, the "voice" coming through from various parts of the circle, moving rapidly across from one sitter to the other

when addressing them. It was for this reason that I asked the question as to how far he was materialized when he was speaking, and he replied that he was "about three-quarters materialized."

The luminous trumpet was then lifted, and a very faint "voice" addressed me. At first I could only catch "John." The "voice" then said "Adcock," and afterwards "St. John Adcock," gradually becoming stronger, and we carried on a short conversation. He then remarked: "Give my regards to Mrs. Dawson Scott and Hermon Ould." These two names were volunteered, and it is only logical to record this incident as evidential. We discussed in a few short sentences our meetings on the P.E.N. Committee. St. John Adcock, who died a year or so back, was a fine writer and essayist; he was editor of *The Bookman*. I did not know him very intimately, but met him several times during the last few years, chiefly at the Committee Meetings of the P.E.N.—the International Association of Writers. The English Committee consists of twelve—six men and six women, under the Presidency of John Galsworthy, and in the short conversation I had with St. John Adcock regarding these meetings his answers were intelligent and unhesitating. A writer well known in England is not necessarily known in America, and it is very improbable that Valiantine had ever heard of him or of his death; he certainly knew nothing whatever of the Committee Meetings of the English P.E.N. Although the St. John Adcock "voice" was somewhat faint, it could be distinctly heard by all the sitters, and the volume of sound was about the same as that of the various "voices" unknown to us which had spoken at various sittings under my own and my wife's mediumship, when Valiantine was not present.

When the St. John Adcock "voice" had finished speaking, a gramophone record was played, and then the luminous trumpet was lifted again and, addressing itself to me, a "voice" said: "Bradley, Arthur Doyle." The "voice" was slightly huskier than it had been on the preceding night. I addressed a few ordinary natural remarks to "Doyle," and the luminous trumpet was then taken round the circle, and other sitters were greeted. Mr. Jaquin asked: "Sir Arthur, would you try and give an imprint of your index finger instead of a thumb?" "Doyle" replied: "I will try and do so."

I then continued the conversation.

H.D.B.: You know this subject so well, Doyle, that you realize how important it would be if you could give me some evidential information on points unknown to any of the sitters in this circle. Will you try and do so?

DOYLE "VOICE": Telephone Jean (his wife) tomorrow, and ask her about the charm on my watch chain. Initials—Malcolm.

The luminous trumpet was then dropped and I remarked to the sitters: "What does he mean by 'Initials—Malcolm'?" Malcolm is not an initial."

A little later the luminous trumpet was again lifted, and the "Doyle voice" addressed me saying: "Bradley, Jean will know the initials."

After a short interval the trumpet was lifted yet again, and a childish feminine "voice" spoke. Recognizing certain characteristic tones as those which had manifested on other occasions during the Valiantine sittings, I asked: "Is that Honey?" The Honey "voice" replied: "Yes, it's Honey. I have been over to see Mrs. Barkell." I asked: "Can you tell me how Mrs. Barkell is now?" And the "voice" replied: "Just the same; she is very ill." Then the "voice" volunteered the statement: "I have put my hand on the paper." This was an interesting point, as later we should have the opportunity of seeing what sort of impression had been made.

A little later there came the "voice" of the "Guide," "Black Foot." He spoke a sentence or two, and then, using the luminous trumpet, a "voice" purporting to be Mrs. Sykes's father, made a few remarks to her and to Mr. Sykes.

After a pause the shrill "voice" of "Bert Everett" called out the one word "Exquisite!" and then, after a further long pause, the "voice" of "Dr. Barnett" said we should close the sitting.

The sitting lasted for about an hour and a half. The various "Guides," with the exception of "Pat O'Brien," spoke only for a few seconds at a time.

The "St. John Adcock voice," although faint, was impressive. If the names volunteered in connection with himself were outside the knowledge of Valiantine, the communications made were evidential. Regarding the message given by the "Doyle voice" I telephoned to Crowborough on the following morning, and gave Lady

Doyle the message exactly as spoken. "Telephone Jean to-morrow. Ask her about the charm on my watch chain. Initials—Malcolm." I also told her that I had raised the question of the "initials" which I could not understand, and that the "Doyle voice" had said to me: "Jean will know the initials."

Lady Doyle told me over the 'phone that Sir Arthur always wore on his watch chain a spade guinea, which he had received when, as a young man, he commenced practice as a doctor. This spade guinea he had given to his brother Malcolm, who died many years ago. After the death of his brother the spade guinea came back into Sir Arthur's possession, and from then onwards he always continued to wear it.

Regarding the word "initials," Lady Doyle said that she did not know whether there were any initials on it, but that later she would find the spade guinea and let me know.

A week or so later Lady Doyle wrote to me, and among other things said: "I looked at the coin, but there is no initial on it; I am wondering whether he could possibly have meant a little locket which he wore on his chain, and which had initials on the back."

When Lady Doyle mentioned a "spade guinea" to me I had the impression in my mind that I myself had known of it in connection with some correspondence between myself and Doyle a few years back, in regard to Mrs. Baylis (the alleged "voice" medium, with whom I had what I considered to be a fraudulent sitting, which was reported in the Press). I took the trouble to search my Press cuttings book, but found I had made no reference to the spade guinea in my articles. The point, of course, was that if Valiantine had no knowledge whatever of this spade guinea the words spoken by the "Doyle voice" would have evidential value. Strangely enough, however, a few weeks afterwards when my secretary was searching through my files for some correspondence which had taken place between the Rev. Herbert Thurston and myself, and which was placed under the Index section T-U-V-Z, a letter fell out from one of the folders, which by some peculiar chance proved to be a copy of a letter written to Valiantine by me on December 2, 1927, in which I told him that I had had a sitting with Mrs. Baylis, whom I regarded as fraudulent, and that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had written to me with reference to two sittings which he had held with this medium, quoting

certain incidents. In my letter to Valiantine I had written: "Such trifling things as touching a ring and a spade guinea hanging on a watch chain appeared to impress Doyle that she was genuine."

It will therefore be seen that Valiantine knew of this spade guinea on Doyle's watch chain, which might certainly be referred to as a "charm." No reference, however, was made by me in my letter to "initials," nor to the name Malcolm.

Obviously, however, the gist of the message given by the "Doyle voice" was *not* outside the knowledge of the medium, and is therefore liable to be discounted.

Switching on the lights, we discovered that certain impressions had been made upon the smoked paper on the top of the stool (Exhibit No. 3, p. 324) and also on the smoked paper which had been placed on the carpet underneath the stool. On this there were only some meaningless scrolls. (Exhibit No. 4, p. 326.)

Mr. Jaquin fixed these two sheets, and took both home with him that night for examination.

No discernible impressions were discovered on the modelling wax.

*Exhibit No. 3*

*A photograph of the smoked paper as found after the séance on Saturday, February 21, 1931. This sheet was placed on the top of the stool, and again it was alleged that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was trying to get an imprint through. The peculiar outline on the right was alleged to be the spirit hand of "Honey."*



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## CHAPTER V

### AN INTERLUDE

*Valiantine unwell—A fluent sitting—Communication outside the knowledge of the medium or the sitters—The "Dewar voice" refers to his index finger—Three "voices" heard speaking together and overlapping.*

*Sunday, February 22, 1931.*

WHEN I met Valiantine at breakfast he told me that before he had retired to bed on the previous evening, although he had no cold, he had started to cough violently, and had then brought up a small quantity of blood. He seemed genuinely worried about his condition. I asked him how he had slept and how he felt that morning, and he replied that he had slept soundly, and that he felt perfectly well.

As we had held sittings on the three previous evenings, it had not been our intention to hold a séance on this Sunday evening. Valiantine, however, said that he would like to hold a short sitting with Mrs. Bradley and myself, in order that he might ask Dr. Barnett the cause of the haemorrhage.

He seemed perfectly fit all day, but two or three times he referred to the bringing up of blood, and seemed to be not only puzzled over the matter, but a trifle alarmed. I treated the matter quite casually, as I did not think it advisable to increase his apparent anxiety. I was not particularly desirous of holding a sitting on this evening. In view of the very busy week I had in front of me, and the late hours of the preceding week, I wanted to get to bed early. After dinner, however, at about 9 o'clock, Valiantine again referred to the blood, and we agreed to hold a very short sitting of only a few minutes, in order that he might ask the opinion of "Dr. Barnett."

Valiantine, my wife and I went to my study at about 9 o'clock. The luminous trumpet was placed in the centre of the room. The gramophone was not used.

Within a few seconds of switching off the light the first "voice"—that of "Bert Everett"—was heard, and although we had agreed that we should only sit for a few minutes, from then onwards, for one hour and

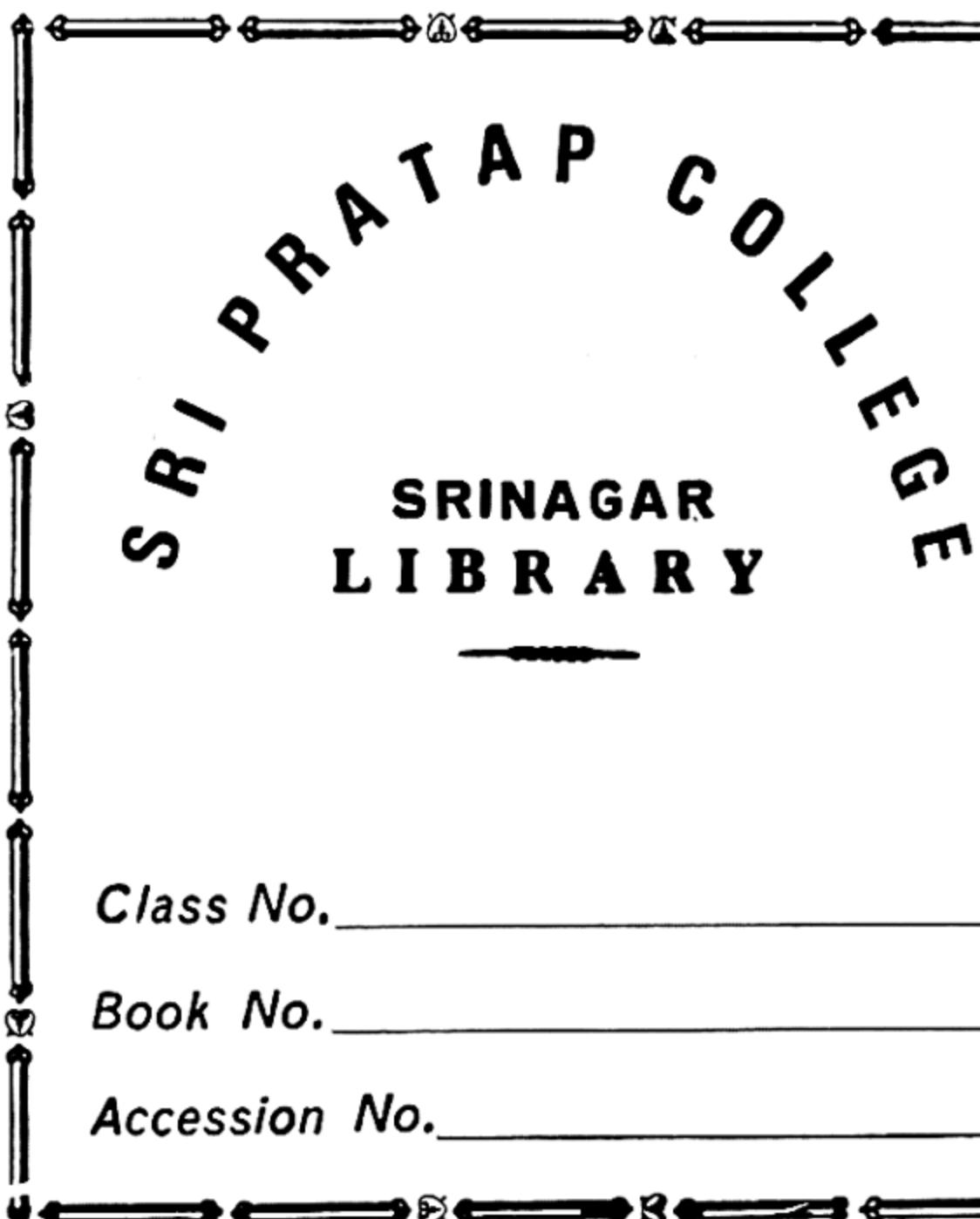
*Exhibit No. 4*

*A photograph of the smoked paper placed underneath the stool on Saturday, February 21, 1931.*

[to face page 320.]

EXHIBIT NO. 4.

UNITED STATES  
v.  
JOHN HENRY DILLON



twenty-five minutes, fourteen different "voices" manifested, practically without cessation. There was never a pause between one "voice" and the other of more than thirty seconds, and the sitting constituted what I consider—after the experiences of many hundreds of sittings, during an intensive study of many years—one of the most fluent and remarkable "voice" séances I have ever known.

The first greeting was from "Bert Everett," talking easily and quickly, and then "Dr. Barnett" came through. When his "voice" spoke to us we imagined that a short conversation would ensue during which Valiantine might ask his questions as to his health, and that then the sitting would close. The questions were asked, but the sitting continued for long afterwards. Among other things, "Dr. Barnett" said that, with regard to the imprints which they were trying to get through, the modelling wax prepared by Mr. Sykes should be made a little softer.

"Dr. Barnett" spoke with each of us. The conversation with Valiantine was rapid and natural, the questions and answers overlapping. When Valiantine was addressing the "voice" he spoke in distinctly respectful and somewhat subservient tones, such as: "Doctor, can you tell me why so and so and so and so—" and the overlapping "voice" of "Dr. Barnett" replied to him.

The overlapping of these two voices was noticeable and dramatic. The only analogy I can give to describe the effect is that attained in certain productions of the Theatre Guild of New York, when the producer has, by careful rehearsing, trained the actors to talk through each other's voices; that is, to be explicit, to rehearse them in such a way in quickness of dialogue that the *last three words* of a sentence spoken by one character are anticipatively replied to by the *first three words* of the sentence delivered by the second character; therefore at least three words of the two voices overlap and are delivered simultaneously.

"Dr. Barnett" had a long conversation with Valiantine. Valiantine was obviously nervous about the blood he had brought up after the sitting on the previous evening, and asked "Dr. Barnett" the cause. "Dr. Barnett" told him that there was no need to worry, as in the efforts for materialization they were compelled to use not only his ectoplasmic forces, but also his blood. "Dr. Barnett" explained that a certain amount of

Valiantine's blood had been taken from him during the endeavour to materialize for the imprints, but that, before the séance ended, it had been returned to his body. After using these forces the blood had not properly assimilated before Valiantine had retired to bed, which was the reason for the sudden attack of coughing and the bleeding. He assured Valiantine that he could relieve his mind of anxiety; that the process was quite a harmless one, and that he would suffer no ill effects.

Valiantine then asked "Dr. Barnett" why it was that on the two previous evenings he had sweated profusely, and the "doctor" replied that in using his mediumistic forces in the endeavour to obtain skin imprints it was necessary for them to use his sweat glands. The conversation which ensued between Valiantine and "Dr. Barnett" on this night was quite voluble, natural, intelligent, and logical. On one side Valiantine was, apparently quite genuinely, seeking information, and, on the other side, "Dr. Barnett" was overlapping the questions and imparting information.

When this conversation had finished we expected the sitting to close, but one after the other, without pause, twelve further "voices" manifested.

There were five members of my own family, talking easily and fluently; two entities outside my family, and five more of Valiantine's "Guides."

Of the "Guide voices," "Pat O'Brien" spoke with us volubly in his usual manner; "Black Foot," in his deep tones from the centre of the circle, spoke with us on two or three occasions; "Kokum," in his powerful "voice," spoke independently from a region somewhere near the ceiling; "Cristo d'Angelo" spoke to us in Italian, and then, upon request, sang in that language in vibrant tones, the sound of his "voice" coming from high up in the room, some twelve feet away from where Valiantine was sitting. The unusual Chinese "voice" of another Guide—"Chang Wei"—spoke a few words to us in pidgin-English, and then sang a quaint song in his own language.

Of the personal "voices," I noted it as peculiar that "Warren Clarke," using the luminous trumpet, came through, but spoke only a very few words. He just greeted Mrs. Bradley and myself, and instead of carrying on a long conversation as he has done on so many occasions, made a few polite and somewhat reserved remarks, and then disappeared. It is necessary here to

note that *this was the last time "Warren Clarke" spoke at the Valiantine sittings.* He never appeared again during the subsequent week, and it may also be noted that not once did he attempt to speak on the occasions before this when we were holding sittings for the express purpose of obtaining the imprints.

Later, using the luminous trumpet, my nephew, Georgie (my sister Annie's son, who died at the age of seventeen), spoke to me and to Mrs. Bradley.

Then followed the "voice" of "Uncle Michael" (an old uncle of mine), speaking in characteristic Irish accents. He was followed by the "voice" of my sister Gertrude, who spoke with us for some time, referring to her husband and various family matters, volunteering names quite freely and easily.

Afterwards, my father—Dan Bradley—spoke with each of us for some time, on several occasions talking to Valiantine. We asked him whether he had seen my son, Dennis Anthony, who was at that time on his way to Buenos Aires. He replied that he had seen him on the boat, and we then asked, "Can you tell us how he is?" At once the reply came, "He is quite all right now, but he was sick yesterday" (Saturday). This might be regarded as an evidential point, of a fact volunteered which was outside the knowledge of the medium or of any of the sitters present. It was a week or so afterwards before we received a letter from my son, posted at Lisbon, in which he said that he was perfectly fit and enjoying himself, but that on the Saturday (February 21) he had been sick all day and had spent most of it in his cabin.

Then there followed a "voice" announcing itself as "Marshall Hall." This "voice" was fairly strong and characteristic, and bore distinct similarities to Marshall Hall's method of delivery. I asked him whether he had been present at the sitting which I attended with Mrs. Garrett—the clairvoyant medium—and he replied that he had, and had endeavoured to communicate with me, but that he had found the method very difficult. (This refers to Chapter IV, Book I.) I discussed certain incidents of the Rouse murder case with him, and his answers were exceptionally clear and concise on certain legal points.

Just towards the end of the sitting, after two or three attempts had been made to lift the luminous trumpet, as though considerable difficulty was being experienced

in doing so, it was raised an inch or two from the floor, and a whispering, husky "voice" announced itself as "Dewar." Eventually we succeeded in carrying on a short conversation, but the "voice" could only speak in faint whispers, and the tone conveyed none of the peculiar characteristics of Dewar's voice which I knew so well. During the short conversation nothing of evidential value was given. It consisted of references to Dewar's horses, and to public speeches on occasions when we had both been speaking together. He said he found it very difficult to speak in this way. At the end he volunteered a statement of which very careful note must be taken. He told me that he had tried to get his *index finger on the wax*. It should be noted that on the previous evening we had failed to discover any discernible impressions on the modelling wax.

Shortly after this "Dr. Barnett" closed the sitting.

With one exception—the "Lord Dewar voice," which was weak and indistinct—the fluency of the "voices," which spoke practically without a pause for ninety minutes, was phenomenal. At one time three "voices" were heard speaking together, one across the other, two from high up in the room, and one from the centre of the floor: "Kokum," "Bert Everett" and "Black Foot"—all overlapping, "Kokum" shouting his remarks in a tremendous tone, and the shrill "voice" of "Bert Everett" making jocular remarks regarding the other two.

It is unquestionable that on this evening much genuine phenomena took place.

## CHAPTER VI

### PRECAUTIONS AND A SIMILARITY

*The third attempt for imprints—“Lord Dewar’s” curious voice—Two distinct impressions—The suggestion that impressions be taken of Valiantine’s and the sitters’ big toes—Precautions—The Valiantine impression compared with the “spirit” impressions—A striking similarity—Valiantine agitated.*

*Monday, February 23, 1931.*

On this evening the third sitting for imprints took place, the sitters and conditions being exactly the same as on the previous Saturday.

One sheet of smoked paper was placed on a blotting-pad on top of the stool and one sheet was placed underneath the stool. A tin of modelling wax, which on this occasion Mr. Sykes had made softer, was placed by the side of the top sheet.

During the sitting, which lasted about an hour and a quarter, the “voice” manifestations were very few. Only three of the “Guide voices” spoke. “Bert Everett” at one period called out “Exquisite.” Early in the sitting “Dr. Barnett” answered a few questions which were put to him regarding the imprints, and said that he would try to get further imprints through.

Towards the end of the sitting a weak and muffled “voice” speaking from the trumpet—which was only moved slightly from the ground—announced itself as “Dewar,” but the “voice” sounded in no way like that of the late Lord Dewar. In fact, in giving the name, it was wrongly pronounced as “Do-er,” and not “Dew-er.” This, to my mind, was a very peculiar point, and may indicate impersonation. This “voice” only spoke a sentence or two, and in answer to a question said, “I have tried to give an imprint.”

After this, “Pat O’Brien,” using the luminous trumpet, talked to several of the sitters for a short time, and this was the only “voice” which spoke more than two or three sentences.

The luminous trumpet was lifted, and a husky “voice” announced “Congrave.” I asked for further

**Exhibit No. 5**

*A photograph of the smoked paper as found on the top of the stool after the séance on Monday, February 23, 1931. This top sheet contains two clear impressions. It was alleged that the late Lord Dewar had tried to give an imprint.*

[to face page 332.]

EXHIBIT NO. 5.

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TICKLE CROWN

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particulars, but no reply was made, and the trumpet was dropped.

Shortly after this "Dr. Barnett" closed the sitting.

When the lights were turned on it was found that two distinct impressions had been made—one on the sheet on top of the stool (Exhibit No. 5, p. 332) and another on the sheet underneath the stool (Exhibit No. 6, p. 334). A very good impression had also been made on the modelling wax (Exhibit No. 7, p. 342).

Mr. Jaquin immediately fixed the smoked sheets.

When Valiantine and the other sitters had left the séance room, Mr. Jaquin and I had a talk together, and we arranged that he should take the impressions of the big toes of Valiantine and of all those present in the circle.

He therefore at once prepared fresh sheets of smoked paper. We then joined the others and I told them it was absolutely necessary that every possible precaution should be taken, and that I would like them to agree to have their toe prints taken. When I made the suggestion, although I avoided looking straight towards Valiantine's direction, I could notice that, in his manner, he did not seem at all disturbed.

When the impressions had been taken I asked each of those present to place his or her signature on the smoked paper underneath the toe prints.

The four men returned to the séance room, and Mr. Jaquin first took an impression of his own toes—right and left. Valiantine then took off his shoes and socks quite quickly, and, taking a sheet of the smoked paper, was about to take the impression himself, when Mr. Jaquin intercepted him. Mr. Jaquin took hold of Valiantine's right and left toes, and took the impression of them in the manner he desired. These impressions were taken on the same sheet of smoked paper that Mr. Jaquin had used himself. I then at once asked Valiantine to sign his name underneath his impressions. The smoked paper was immediately fixed. (Exhibit No. 8, p. 336.)

In turn the toe impressions of the other sitters, Mr. Charles Sykes and myself, were taken, and then those of Mrs. Sykes and Mrs. Bradley.

After these impressions had been completed and the paper fixed, we compared Valiantine's toe prints with the alleged spirit imprints which had been obtained during the evening. Mr. Jaquin at once observed the

*Exhibit No. 6*

*A photograph of the sheet found underneath the stool on February 23, 1931, when it was alleged that Lord Dewar had tried to give an imprint. It will be seen by the distinct light patch that the smoked paper had been moved during the séance.*

*(See file page 331.)*

Exhibit No. 6.

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similarity. I had that day purchased two powerful magnifying glasses for the purpose of examination, and on comparison I also observed the similarity.

After the taking of the toe prints Valiantine and the other sitters had returned to the drawing-room. I rejoined them and asked Valiantine, quite genially, to come and glance at the imprints. He then joined Mr. Jaquin and myself in the séance room. Mr. Jaquin handed him the two smoked sheets, the one containing the impression obtained during the séance, and the other the impression of Valiantine's left toe. Mr. Jaquin, in a casual manner, remarked, "Have a look at this, George—they look rather similar to your left toe."

It must be understood that both Mr. Jaquin and myself, throughout the whole of this incident, were purposely very easy and friendly in our manner towards Valiantine. When Mr. Jaquin handed the two sheets to Valiantine for comparison, I watched Valiantine closely. As he took the sheets his hands trembled slightly. This was the first sign of agitation he displayed. He had hardly glanced at the imprints for more than two seconds, when he said: "I can't see any similarity. They are not at all the same."

We did not wish, at this period, to disturb Valiantine any further, so we laughingly endeavoured to calm him by telling him how curious similarities such as these do sometimes occur with skin imprints.

Mr. Jaquin took away with him that night the séance imprints and also the toe imprints, and I asked him to have photographs taken of these as soon as possible the next day.

When my guests had left that evening I had a minute or two's conversation with Valiantine, in which I purposely refrained from making any further allusion to the imprints. I chatted to him for a while on other subjects, and took particular care to be as easy as possible in my manner.

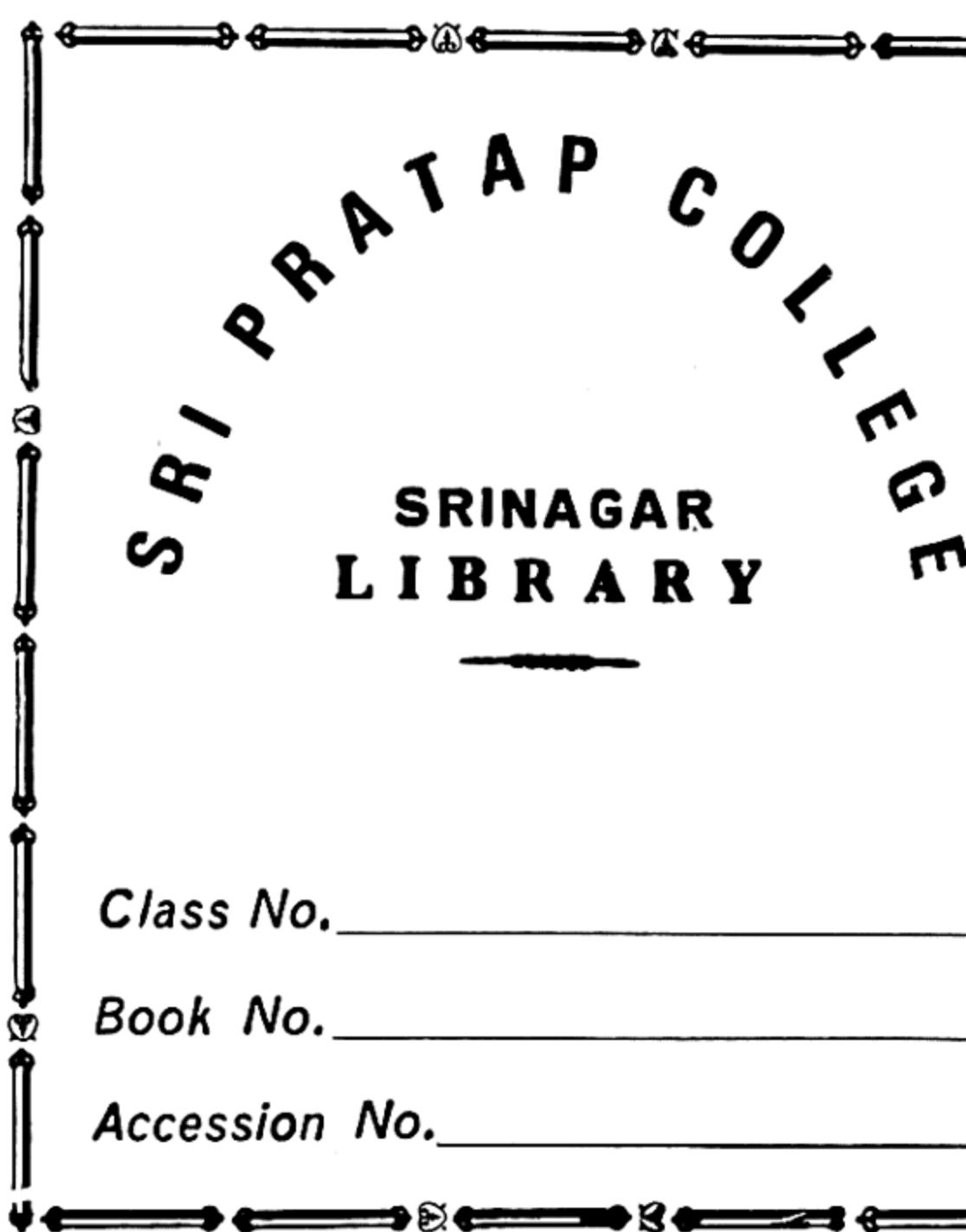
**Exhibit No. 8**

One of the sheets upon which the normal toe impressions of the sitters were taken after the séance on Monday, February 23, 1931. This contains the toe impressions of George Valiantine in duplicate—right and left. The impressions at the top of the paper are those of Mr. Noel Jaquin's toes.

[On face page 33<sup>a</sup>]

Exhibit No. 8.





## CHAPTER VII

### THE NERVOUSNESS OF VALIANTINE

*Enlargements made of the prints—An embarrassing situation—Valiantine's depression—A mixed sitting—Valiantine's "Guides" are silent—Dr. Vivian's first experience with Valiantine—A possible point of evidence—A "voice" alternates in conversation with Dr. Vivian and the Duchess of Hamilton.*

Tuesday, February 24, 1931.

ON this morning, at breakfast, Valiantine appeared very worried and depressed. I took pains to be cheerful with him, as I did not wish him to think that I regarded the discovery of the previous evening as a serious matter. I also impressed upon Mrs. Bradley the necessity of adopting a similar manner.

I left Dorincourt for London immediately after breakfast, and saw Mr. Jaquin at my office. He brought with him all the impressions that we had obtained at the previous sittings, and also the toe imprints, which again were very carefully compared. I then asked Mr. Jaquin to have an enlargement made of the alleged Dewar prints, which had been obtained on the previous evening, February 23 (Exhibit No. 9, p. 338. This should be compared with Exhibit No. 10, p. 338, which is an enlargement of Valiantine's left big toe). I also required enlargements of the alleged thumb imprints of Doyle, which had been obtained at the first sitting held on February 20 (Exhibit No. 11, p. 340), and the curious impression obtained on the second sheet of smoked paper at the same sitting (Exhibit No. 12, p. 344). I also told Mr. Jaquin that I should need an enlargement of the alleged supernormal imprint obtained at the sitting held on Saturday, February 21. (Exhibit No. 13, p. 346.)

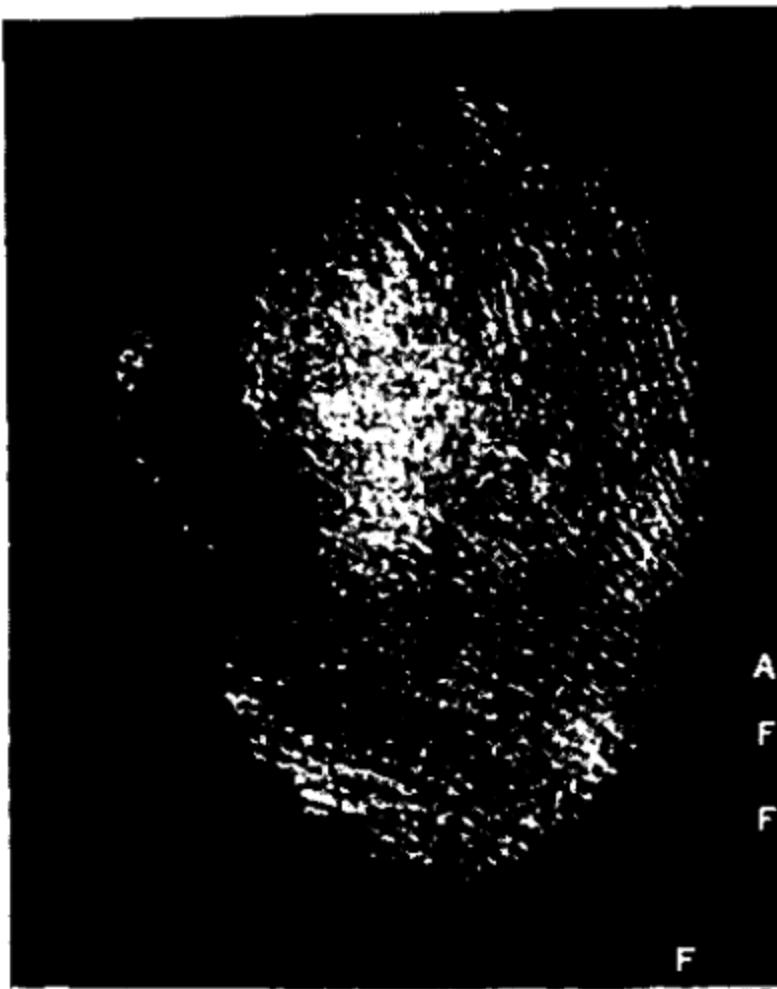
Later I obtained from Mr. Sykes the tin of modelling wax which he had taken home with him, and I also had an enlargement taken of this. (Exhibit No. 7, p. 342).

It had been previously arranged that a series of at least six sittings should be held for imprints, and as all arrangements had to be made well ahead, these dates had been fixed for Friday, Saturday and Monday,

*Exhibit Nos. 9 and 10*

*The two top photographs are the enlargements of the alleged Dewar prints obtained at the séance held at Dorincourt on February 23, 1931.*

*The lower photograph is an enlargement of the left big toe of the medium, George Valiantine, and was taken by Mr. Jaquin immediately after the séance. All of these digital impressions are the same. These are actual enlargements of the originals and have not been photographically reversed, therefore the ridges appear white and the furrows black. The lines marked point to similarity in the apex and ridges surrounding it.*

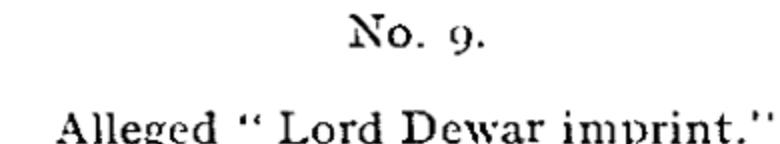


No. 9.

Alleged "Lord Dewar imprint."

A—Apex.

B—Base furrow.



No. 9.

Alleged "Lord Dewar imprint."

F—Fork in furrow.



No. 10.

Print of George Valiantine's left big toe.

EXHIBITS Nos. 9 AND 10.

[to face page 338.]

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February 20, 21 and 23, and Friday, Saturday and Monday, February 27, 28 and March 2. The middle days of the week I had arranged for other sitters.

Therefore, the next evening arranged for an imprint sitting was Friday, February 27.

I told Mr. Jaquin of Valiantine's depressed condition at breakfast, and that I thought it necessary for us to do our utmost to restore his confidence, as it would be very valuable if we could succeed in obtaining further, and perhaps even more complete evidence of fraud. We discussed the question of Valiantine having been told by Mr. Jaquin that the Friday imprint was similar to the actual and genuine Doyle thumb, and the fact that he had also been told of the similarity of his toe to the alleged Dewar imprint. It was obvious to me that Valiantine would most certainly be cogitating on these two incidents.

Here is a point of psychological interest, which I interpolate. Although when the similarity of his toe imprint to that of the alleged Dewar print was pointed out to Valiantine he did not then, or during the remaining six days he stayed with me at Dorincourt, once advance the very obvious argument: "What about the Doyle imprint—Jaquin said it was similar to Doyle's?"

I told Mr. Jaquin that though I did not think it would be an easy matter, I thought that between the Tuesday and the following Friday I should be able to restore Valiantine's confidence, and that during the interval we should make every preparation to obtain further direct and irrefutable proofs, leaving him no loophole whatever should he again attempt any deliberate fraudulent action.

It had been previously arranged that on this day we were to lunch at the house of a well-known West End clergyman. Valiantine, accompanied by my wife, called for me just before 1 o'clock. In his manner he was still obviously depressed. Although I was light and jocular with him it had very little effect. He appeared to be preoccupied.

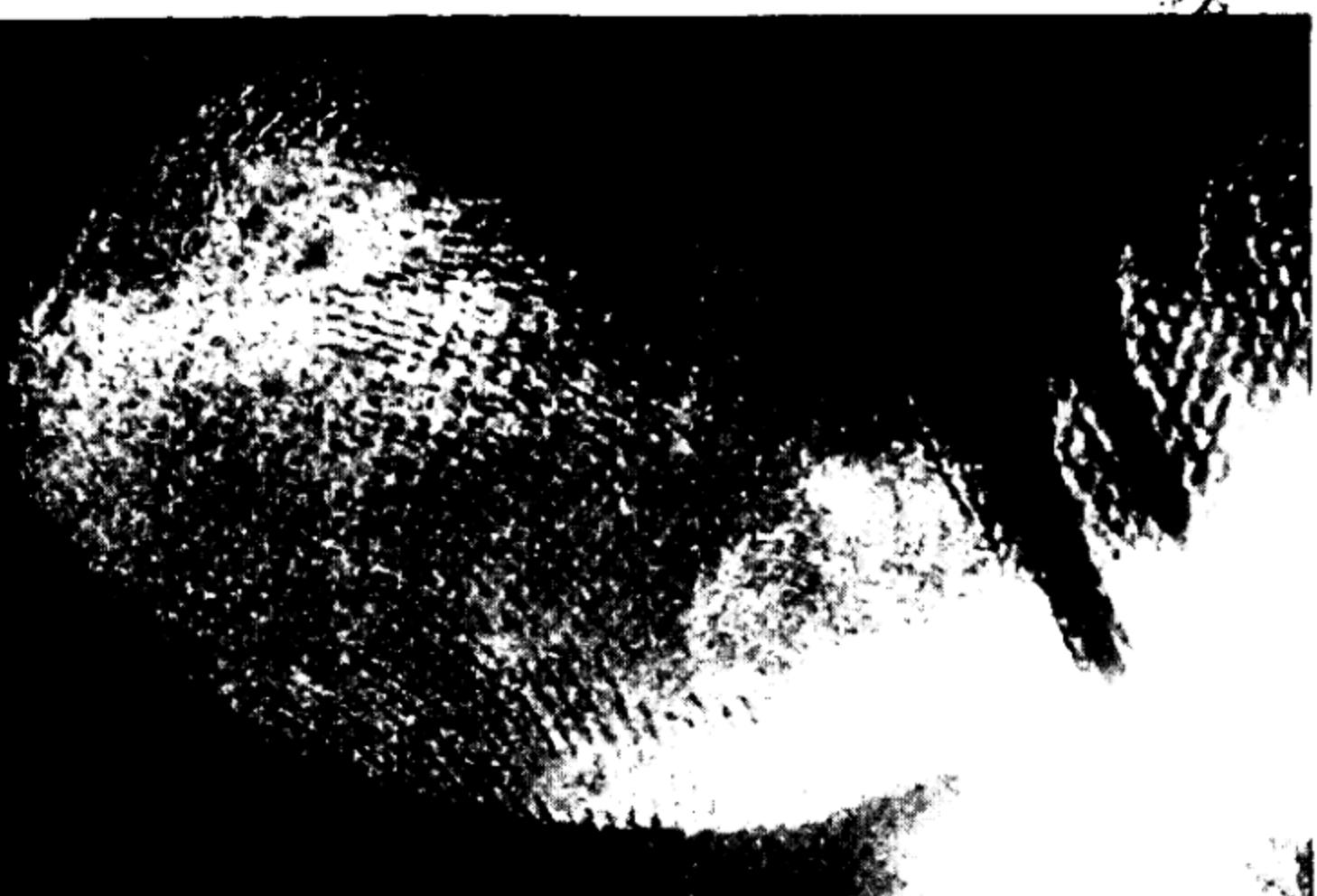
There were only five of us present at the luncheon, and although I enjoyed the society of my host—a charming and clever man—the conversation, which was chiefly on the philosophical side of psychics, was not, in the circumstances, a particularly easy one for me to manipulate.

**Exhibit No. 11**

*The left hand photograph is an enlargement of the impression of the alleged Doyle imprint. The right is an enlargement of the normal impression of the right big toe of George Valiantine.*

*to file page 340.*

EXHIBIT NO. 11.



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Valiantine, throughout the luncheon and afterwards, was quiet and reserved, and palpably awkward and stilted in his answers when psychic matters were being discussed.

As I had other appointments during the afternoon my wife and Valiantine returned to Dorincourt, and I did not see him again until I returned for dinner.

My position on this evening was a peculiarly difficult one. A week or so before, I had invited the Duchess of Hamilton, Dr. Margaret Vivian, Mr. David Gow (late editor of *Light*) and Miss Delius, whom the Duchess of Hamilton brought with her, to dine with me and hold a sitting afterwards.

As my investigations of the suspected frauds were not completed, it was naturally impossible for me to give my guests any indication of what had transpired.

In view of the nervous condition of Valiantine there was the distinct probability that the sitting would prove a fiasco, and I should not have been surprised had the results turned out a complete blank.

On arriving at Dorincourt I did not see Valiantine, but went straight to my room to change.

When I entered the drawing-room, Dr. Vivian, Mr. Gow and Valiantine were seated next to each other. Strangely enough, Dr. Vivian, who is an intelligent psychical researcher, was discussing with Mr. Gow and Valiantine a case of mediumistic fraud. The coincidence appealed to my ironic sense. The talk on the subject continued for a short time, and although Valiantine did not join in, except with slight interjections here and there, I noticed that, now and again, the muscles of his hands twitched nervously, and as soon as I could I directed the conversation into other channels.

During the long series of experiments conducted in previous years, and recorded in my books, I have made a point on the majority of occasions of not introducing the various sitters to the medium or letting him know who was likely to be present. He would therefore not only be ignorant of their names, but he would only see their faces for the first time as they entered the séance room, immediately before the lights were switched off. I have always been particular on this point, because by this method the value of any evidential communications which may be volunteered is obviously enhanced.

This occasion, however, was a dinner party, and Valiantine knew the names of the guests who were

expected. Dr. Vivian had only once met him before, and none of the other guests had ever experienced a sitting with him.

Anticipating the difficulties of his position, I had, earlier in the day, discussed the situation with Mrs. Bradley. Since we had on so many occasions in the past obtained "voice" phenomena while Valiantine was *not* present, there was, of course, the possibility that certain personal "voices" might be able to manifest from this combination of mediumship, as apart from Valiantine.

The sitting took place after dinner at about 9 o'clock.

The sitters were: The Duchess of Hamilton, Miss Delius, Dr. Margaret Vivian, Mr. David Gow, Mrs. Bradley, myself and Valiantine.

After two records had been played on the gramophone, "Bert Everett's voice" was heard to say: "Good evening, Souls."

Following a pause, the luminous trumpet was lifted, and, addressing me, a "voice" announced "Henderson" and then—"Admiral Henderson." I had met Admiral Henderson on a few occasions when he was alive, and he had sat with me once at a séance at Dorincourt, and also on another occasion, at a "voice" séance held at Mr. Lionel Corbett's house in Hampshire, under the mediumship of Evan Powell. A little time before he died we had a slight disagreement over the Baylis case. The "voice" discussed this disagreement with me quite intelligently.

A little later on the luminous trumpet was lifted, and a very muffled and indistinct whispering "voice" endeavoured to address Dr. Vivian. It was impossible, however, to catch what the "voice" said. After two or three attempts, during which the trumpet was dropped, the "voice" succeeded in giving the name "Claude," and then a few short sentences were exchanged between Dr. Vivian and the "voice." Dr. Vivian told us afterwards that at a sitting, unknown to anyone present in the room, she had arranged that this particular name "Claude" should be given through if possible at a Valiantine sitting.

There was a further pause, then the luminous trumpet was lifted and a "voice" addressed itself to the Duchess of Hamilton, saying it was "her mother." After speaking a few words the trumpet went straight over to Dr. Vivian and greeted her. The "voice" then carried on a short conversation with the Duchess, and also with

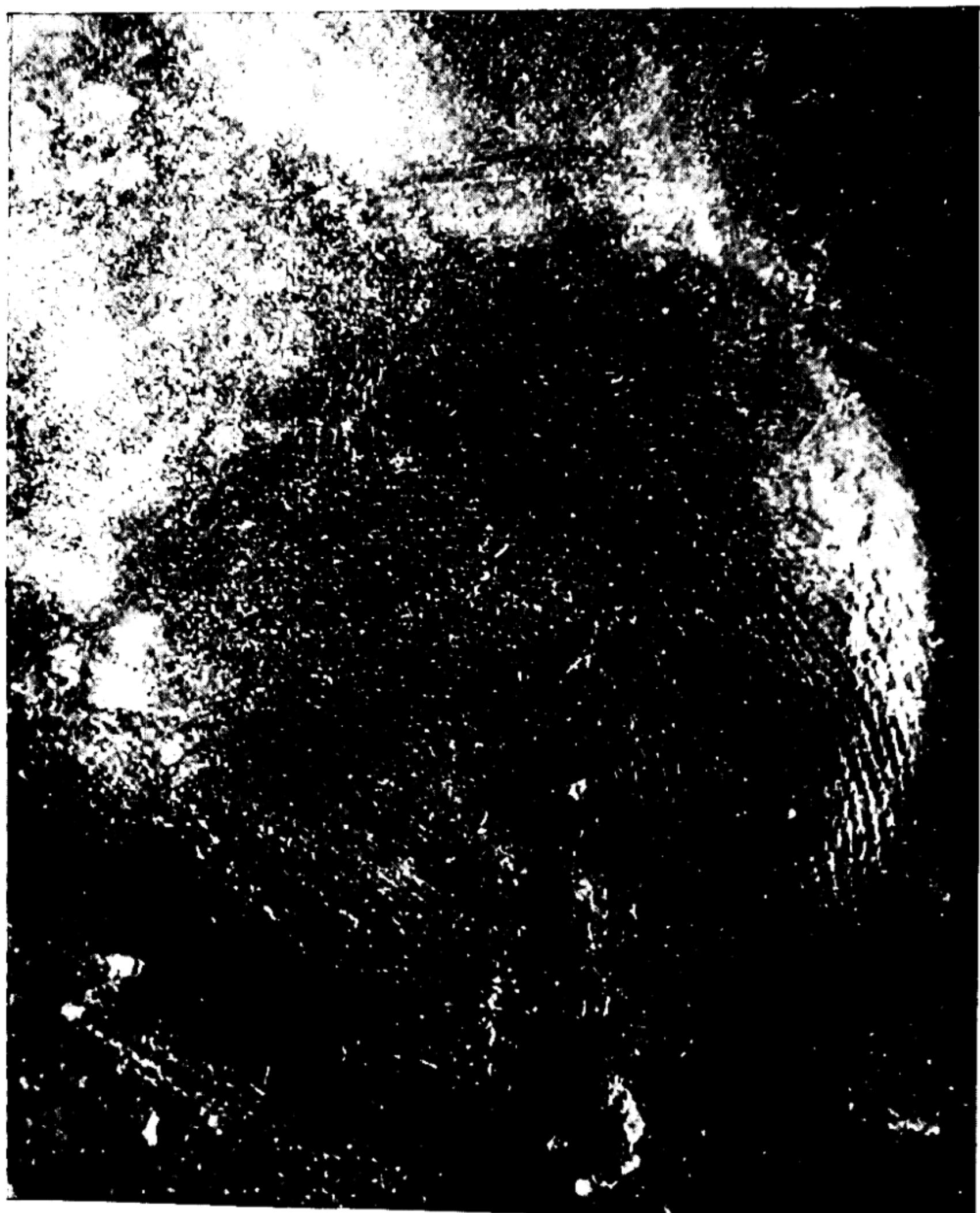


EXHIBIT No. 7.

An enlarged photograph of the impression obtained on the modelling wax, placed in the circle, on Monday, February 23rd, 1931, by Mr. Charles Sykes.

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Dr. Vivian. The conversation alternated between the two sitters.

There is a point here which might be considered evidential.

Dr. Vivian had not, I believe, before this evening, met the Duchess of Hamilton, but she knew her mother very well indeed. The "voice" talked with Dr. Vivian familiarly, and answered the various questions which she put with intelligence.

Another pause, and then, using the trumpet, a "voice" addressed itself to Miss Delius, speaking a few words and saying something about "Snoozey." Later another "voice" spoke to Miss Delius, announcing itself as "her father," and made references to her work.

More gramophone records were played, and then, using the luminous trumpet, the "voice" of my father—Dan Bradley—spoke a few hurried words to Mrs. Bradley and to me, and then added: "Herbert, it is very difficult to-night." The words spoken were delivered in the unmistakable accent of my father.

There was a further lengthy pause, and then a "voice," announcing itself as "Russell Wallace," addressed itself to me and also to Mr. Gow. A short conversation ensued, in regard to books and works, but the talk was impersonal and non-evidential.

After this, while a gramophone record was being played, and just before it ended, a "voice," speaking independently, made some unintelligible sounds, but none of the sitters could catch the two or three words which were spoken. Two more records were played, and then, as we had been sitting for one and a half hours, I told the sitters that it was quite probable that the words were instructions to close the sitting.

We adjourned to the drawing-room, where I immediately completed my notes.

Although my guests appeared to be impressed by the phenomena, I told them that I considered the sitting comparatively negative, to which Mr. Gow replied: "That is only because you are so accustomed to exceptional results."

It was a very peculiar evening. I had anticipated that possibly we should obtain nothing at all. Yet there were eight personal "voices" which attempted to manifest. They were weak and there was no continued fluency. Only a few points might be regarded as of an

evidential nature, yet during the conversations the various "voices" spoke directly and intelligently.

*It is significant to note that during the whole of the sitting, with the exception of three words from the "Bert Everett voice," none of Valiantine's "Guides" attempted to speak.*

The sitting actually was very similar to many of the "voice" séances which I have held under the mediumship of my wife and myself, *without Valiantine*. By this I mean that it was similar to a few of the *poorer sittings* which we had held when the "voices" had considerable difficulty in sustaining the effort to speak.

Valiantine throughout the day, and during the evening, was in a nervous condition.

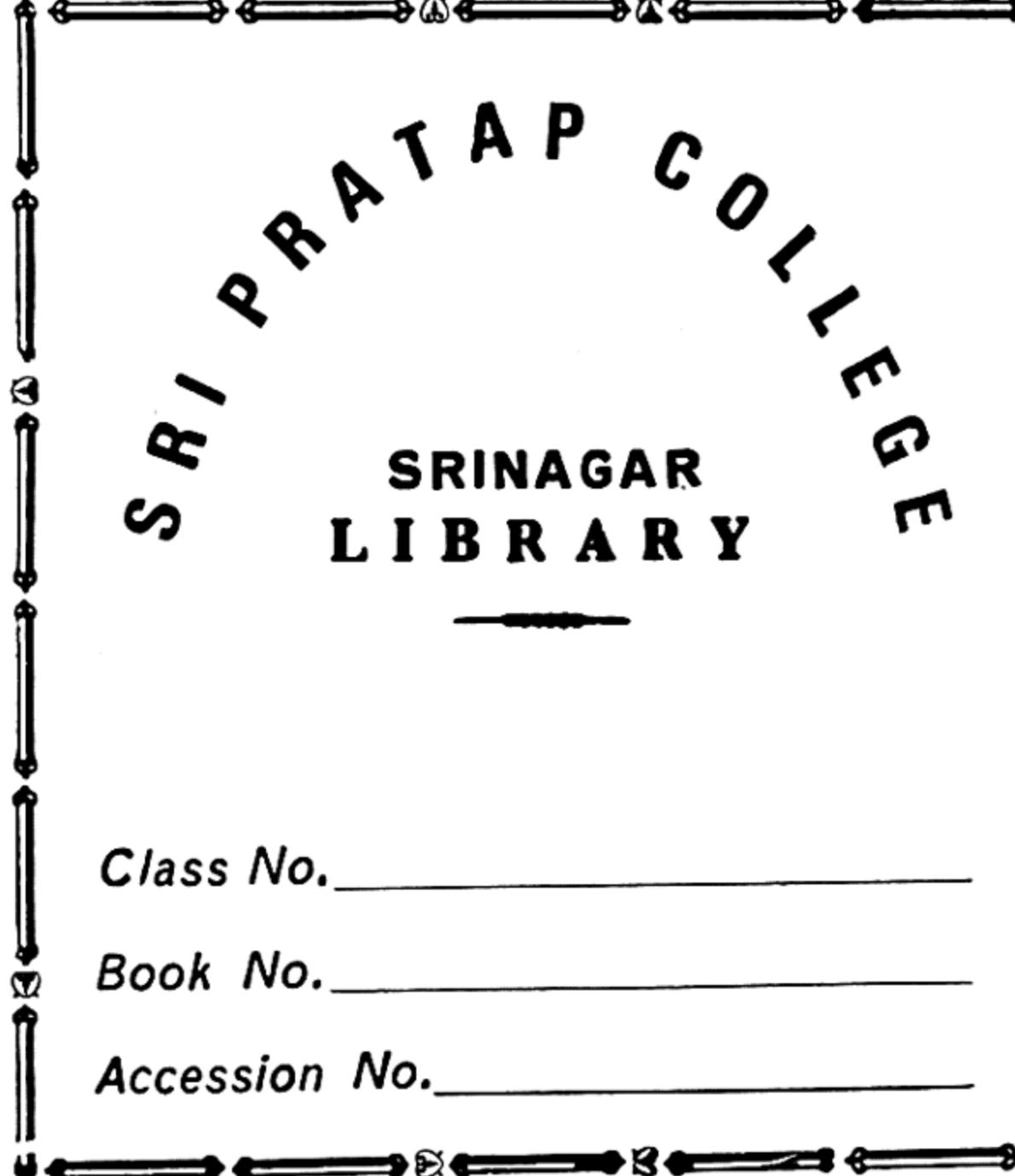
*His "Guides" did not function, and none of the usual phenomena of sittings held under his mediumship occurred.* It is quite possible that during the sitting I have recorded Valiantine may have been merely a passive sitter, and that the forces used for the few manifestations were in no way connected with him, but were drawn from the combined mediumship of Mrs. Bradley and myself.



EXHIBIT No. 12.

This is an enlargement of the curious impression seen in Exhibit No. 2.

[to face page 344.]



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SÉANCE WITH THE DOYLES

*Lady Doyle and Adrian Conan Doyle—Valiantine changes his shoes—Arthur Doyle's voice—Questions of evidence—Three distinct imprints—Genuine phenomena.*

*Wednesday, February 25, 1931.*

THE next morning Valiantine appeared a little more cheerful, and seemed encouraged by the results of the previous evening.

A few days prior to this date I had invited Lady Doyle to dine with me at Dorincourt, and to bring with her any members of her family she wished.

After the previous night's sitting, I had discussed with Mrs. Bradley the various manifestations which had occurred, and which bore similarity to those obtained during our own personal sittings. In view of this we agreed that there was a distinct possibility of genuine phenomena taking place while Lady Doyle was present.

The Doyles were expected to arrive at about 7 o'clock. I had spent the day in London and arrived back at about 6.30, allowing myself just sufficient time to change before their arrival.

A telephone message was received from Lady Doyle saying that they were travelling straight up from Crowborough, and therefore it would be more convenient for them not to dress for dinner. The reason I mention this detail is that instead of changing I spent this half-hour chatting to Valiantine. He was gradually becoming more easy in his manner, and I did not allow him to have the impression that I was in any way suspicious of him. It was necessary for me to refer to the imprints, because it was my intention at this evening's sitting to prepare a sheet of smoked paper and place it in the circle to see what happened. I told him that it was a terribly difficult thing to compare imprints exactly, and that as Mr. Jaquin had said there was a certain similarity in the imprints obtained on Friday to those of Doyle's thumb prints, since Lady Doyle and her son were sitting with us, it would be a very interest-

ing experiment to place a sheet of smoked paper in the circle, as it might be possible, with her presence, to obtain an even better imprint.

Valiantine agreed to this without demur, and I then changed the subject.

Valiantine had spent a restful afternoon at Dorincourt and had not been out. He was wearing an ordinary lounge suit, with black laced shoes, which were perfectly clean. Just before 7 o'clock, after taking a cocktail with me, he got up and said: "Well, I guess I'll go and change my shoes." In the circumstances it was a peculiar remark to make, and, as events proved, somewhat inexplicable. One would have expected him to say, in his American manner, "Well, I guess I'll take a wash." He left me for a few minutes and then rejoined me in the drawing-room, wearing patent leather pumps. He had worn these pumps occasionally on other evenings.

Lady Doyle arrived shortly afterwards, accompanied by her son, Adrian. Lady Doyle had met Valiantine before, and had sat with him a few years previously at my house, but this was the first occasion on which Adrian Doyle had seen him.

After we had dined, I prepared one sheet of smoked paper and placed it on the blotting-pad on top of the coffin stool, which stood in the centre of the circle, as on previous occasions.

The luminous trumpet was placed by the side of the stool.

It was a small circle of only five sitters, and the positions, left to right, were: Valiantine, myself, Lady Doyle, Adrian Doyle, Mrs. Bradley.

I asked each of the sitters to sign the smoked paper, which was then numbered according to the positions in which they sat, from left to right.

The lights were switched off, and after two records had been played the shrill "voice" of "Bert Everett" was heard from near the ceiling, calling, "Good evening, Souls." I then asked a question as to whether the conditions were good, and "Bert Everett" replied: "Exquisite."

Shortly after this, the "voice" of "Dr. Barnett," speaking very clearly and distinctly, was heard, apparently coming from the floor in the centre of the circle. "Dr. Barnett" spoke easily to each member in the circle. He said that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was there, and that he would speak to us.

DRAP (X) MURKIN  
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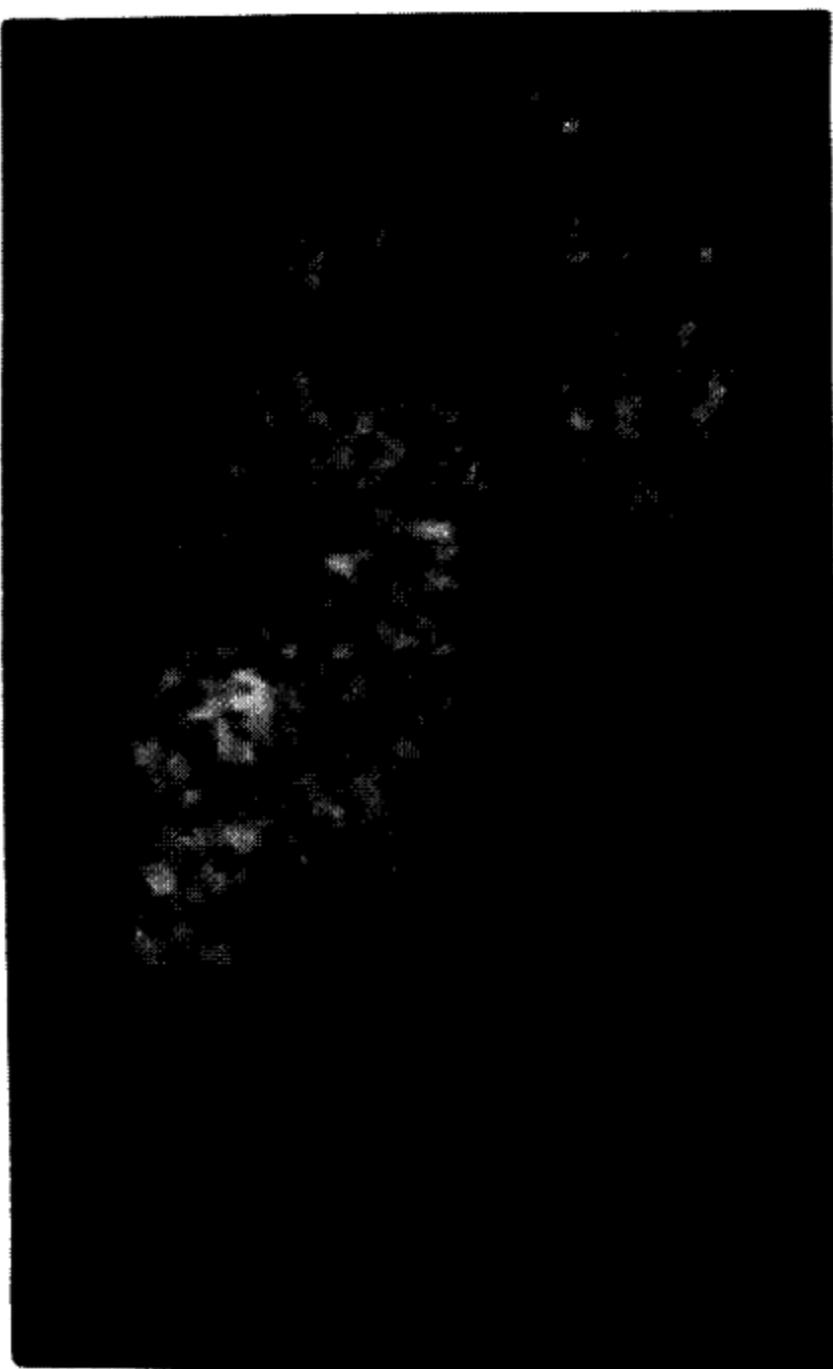


EXHIBIT NO. 13

The left-hand photograph is an enlargement of the top joint of the alleged experimental print obtained at Dorincourt on Saturday, Feb. 21st, 1931. The right-hand photograph is an enlargement of the normal impression of George Valentine's right toe.

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A little later the trumpet was lifted and the "voice" addressed Lady Doyle as "Jean," and Adrian Doyle as "Adrian." He talked with them at first in a somewhat excited manner. The greetings and conversation which followed were emotional. The emotion of the "voice" when speaking to them was impressive. Lady Doyle and Adrian Doyle both stated after the first few sentences had been spoken that they recognized the "voice" as that of Sir Arthur.

The first conversation was natural and quick, and the replies were given without the slightest hesitancy. It did not last very long and at the end the trumpet was dropped, as if the power of the "voice" was exhausted.

During the sitting nine other individual "voices" spoke on different occasions. The "Doyle voice" came through persistently at odd intervals on *seven* different occasions throughout the evening. Each time this "voice" manifested practically the whole of the conversation was addressed to Lady Doyle and Adrian Doyle. The "voice" gave a few words of greeting to Mrs. Bradley and myself and also to Valiantine. When speaking to me he added: "Bradley, thank you for giving me this opportunity."

The sitting lasted for over an hour and a half, and the "Doyle voice" dominated the evening and occupied most of the time. The "voice" would continue its conversation with Lady Doyle and Adrian Doyle with fluency, and here and there would intercept the conversation with odd remarks to me. Then, after a while, when the power appeared to be diminishing, the luminous trumpet would drop to the floor. A great deal of the conversation during the time the "Doyle voice" was speaking was upon personal and domestic matters concerning the Doyle family, and they were conducted in precisely the same manner as if he were alive and present in the room. On one occasion when Doyle was speaking the "voice" volunteered to Adrian Doyle the following sentence: "I am ready to go in the 'chitty' any time with you," and then went on to discuss the son's racing cars. There was a deepness in the intonation of the "voice" which was characteristic of the Doyle accent, and the determined manner of utterance was characteristic. I will deal with Lady Doyle's impression and the impressions of Adrian Doyle later. I am here recording my own impressions, which were gleaned entirely independently from theirs.

I have stated that the "Doyle voice" occupied most of the evening, but during the intervals of these manifestations other "voices" came through of an entirely different character.

After the "Doyle voice" had spoken, for the first time, "Pat O'Brien" spoke, genially and loquaciously, with each of the sitters in the circle.

Cristo D'Angelo gave a greeting in Italian—"Buona Sera"—and, in response to a request, sang a song in his own language, in a very loud and quite melodious "voice."

"Bert Everett" came through again, and carried on a short conversation with us all. After this the luminous trumpet was lifted and a "voice," which was not very distinct at first, attempted to speak a word or two, which we could not catch or translate. At the second attempt this "voice," addressing Adrian Doyle, announced itself as "Fatty." The name was volunteered and was recognized by Adrian Doyle as a friend of his named Duncan, who was killed in a motor accident a year or so back. A short conversation ensued between them, during which Fatty referred to motoring and to motor racing.

A little later a "voice" came through announcing itself as "Phineas." The "voice," however, was so weak that no conversation was possible.

Following this, the luminous trumpet was lifted, and a "voice" announcing itself as "Grandfather Doyle" spoke with Lady Doyle and Adrian Doyle, and a conversation ensued regarding paintings.

Then followed another "voice" announcing itself as "Lady Doyle's mother," and carried on a conversation with her and with Adrian Doyle.

After a slight pause, using the luminous trumpet, another "voice" spoke, announcing itself as "Uncle Stewart" to Adrian Doyle. A conversation was carried on between this spirit and Lady Doyle and Adrian Doyle.

In the later part of the evening, just before the end, during one of the conversations I asked "Doyle" about the message given to me to pass on to Lady Doyle, in which he had referred to the "charm on the watch chain." I asked him what he meant by also giving the word "initials," and "Doyle" replied: "Jean will find out about the initials." Afterwards I asked Lady Doyle whether she had found out what was meant by "initials," and she said that she had not yet had an

opportunity of looking for the charm to see whether there were any initials placed on it, but would do so later.

As I have said in a previous chapter, Lady Doyle, when she found the coin, discovered that there were no initials on it and suggested the possibility that he might have meant a little locket that he always wore on his watch chain, on which there were initials on the back. She then added that the locket had his own initials on it—A.C.D., but that would not convey anything.

Just before the sitting ended the luminous trumpet was lifted and a "voice" spoke to me. This "voice" was very weak, but it distinctly said: "Bradley, it's Doyle speaking. I tried to get my imprint on the paper." The "voice" then immediately disappeared. Although the words spoken were clearly heard by all those present in the circle, the "voice" was so faint that it would be impossible to say that it exhibited the pronounced characteristic tones of the "Doyle voice" which had spoken at length throughout the evening, on so many different occasions.

Shortly after this "Dr. Barnett" closed the sitting.

The sitting ended at 10.40.

When the lights were switched on, it was found that on the smoked paper there were three distinct imprints. (Exhibit No. 14, p. 350.) These I immediately fixed with solution.

I had noted that the weak voice towards the end of the sitting had said, "I tried to get an imprint through." The voice did not say that it had succeeded, and it disappeared before I could question it.

I observed that none of these imprints appeared to resemble toe-prints, therefore Valantine's remark to me before the sitting: "I guess I'll change my shoes," may have been deliberately said to cover the fact of his wearing pumps on the occasions when his toe-prints had been discovered.

The next morning I gave the smoked sheets to Mr. Jaquin and asked him to have photographs taken as quickly as possible.

From the commencement of the sitting, for one hour and forty minutes, conversations with the "voices" were carried on practically continuously. Most of the conversations were of a personal nature, but they were carried on in a fluent and unhesitating manner.

All the questions put to "Doyle" were answered

*Exhibit No. 14*

*A photograph of the smoked paper as found after the séance held at Dorincourt on February 25, 1931.*

*Two of the markings are impressions of the papillary ridges. It has not been possible to trace these.*

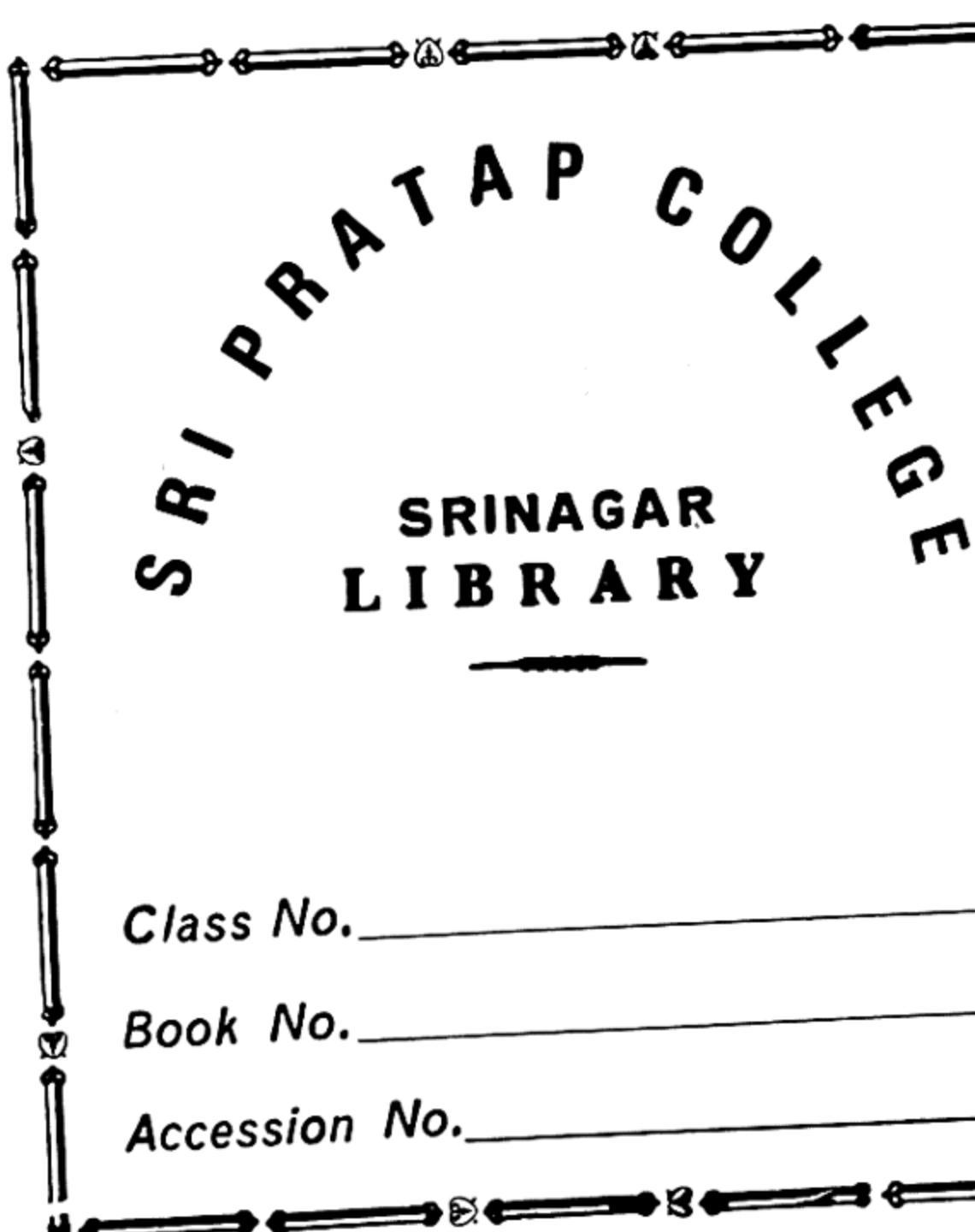
*The imprint in the right hand corner is apparently an impression made by the light pressure of a flexed elbow joint.*

To face page 350.

EXHIBIT No. 14.

EDWARD HARRINGTON, JR., M.D.





immediately and intelligently, and the "Doyle voice" spoke throughout to Lady Doyle and to Adrian Doyle in a poignantly affectionate manner.

As for my own impression at the time, I am compelled to state that my observations of the "Doyle voice" were that I noticed throughout that it possessed distinct personality. On the seven occasions on which he spoke the "voice" gradually gained in volume and the characteristics became more apparent. It would be impossible for me to compare it in exactness with the alleged "Doyle voice" which only spoke a few short sentences on Friday, February 20, and on Saturday, February 21.

When we adjourned from the séance room both Lady Doyle and Adrian Doyle told me that they were both impressed and delighted with what had taken place. It was naturally impossible for me at that moment to tell them what had been discovered on the previous Monday.

While I was discussing with Lady Doyle the phenomena that had taken place, I was considering in my own mind the somewhat remarkable sitting we had experienced, considering the peculiar circumstances.

The fluency of the "voices" stood out in very vivid contrast to the staccato sentences uttered by the various "Guides" and others, at the sittings devoted specifically for imprints, at which Mr. Jaquin and Mr. Sykes were present.

A few days afterwards Lady Doyle wrote me a charming letter, in which she said, among other things:

"I want to thank you for your great kindness in giving up the whole of the evening so that we could have the happiness of a very wonderful sitting and for your most kind hospitality."

A little later, when replying to a letter of mine in which I asked her to tell me whether she regarded any of the communications as evidential and characteristic of her husband, she replied:

"With regard to the evidential side of the séance, both Adrian and I were impressed by the timbre of the voice which came through. The rich broadness of it and that certain something which the individual voice has, seemed to be in it. With regard to the matter, it was just what one would have expected in getting in touch

with a dear one beyond the Veil of Death, but it would not, I suppose, be considered evidential from the point of view of the 'man in the street.' What he said to Adrian, 'I am ready to go in the "chitty" any time with you' was evidential, because he always enjoyed going in the boys' new racing cars, and he has used those very words to Adrian two or three times."

In this letter Lady Doyle expresses sanely and logically exactly what I feel in regard to this particular séance. It was for her and for Mr. Adrian Doyle to say how much evidence of personality they had obtained from the "voice."

Lady Doyle is a very intelligent woman, and Adrian Doyle is an extremely healthy and finely intelligent young man. Neither possesses the very faintest suspicion of that neuroticism which exists among so many spiritualists and psychical researchers. Both are critical and logical in their attitude and their analysis of values.

I, coldly and critically, observed the personality which they described. This sitting had been devoted especially to them. The conversations with the "Doyle voice" which lasted for a considerable time were easy, familiar and domestic. There was not much outside evidence volunteered, but the conversations were conducted by the "Doyle voice" in that natural manner which would exist if he were present in the room.

The sitting held on this evening presents a complex problem. In ordinary circumstances this circle of five sitters might be regarded as an ideal one for the manifestation of supernormal phenomena. It must be remembered that Lady Doyle has mediumistic faculties; Adrian Doyle has studied the subject extensively, and it must again be repeated that Mrs. Bradley and myself have obtained exceptional and fluent "voice" phenomena when Valiantine has *not* been present.

I am certain that genuine phenomena took place at this sitting. Whether the bulk of the mediumistic powers was supplied by Mrs. Bradley, myself or Valiantine, it is impossible to say.

Psychologically, in view of the circumstances, it was one of the most interesting evenings I have ever spent.

It must also be observed that it has *not* been possible to prove that the papillary ridges shown on the imprint (Exhibit No. 14, p. 350) obtained at this sitting were produced by fraudulent means.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE COLLAPSE OF VALIANTINE

*The last sitting—The exposure—An elbow joint imprint—Additional precautions—The dye—The plasticine sprinkled with Methylene Green—The sculptor's modelling wax—The plan of campaign—A short sitting in a satiric atmosphere—Several imprints—An impression taken of Valiantine's foot—Valiantine confronted with the "spirit" enlargement in comparison with his own big toe—Mr. Jaquin's precipitate action—Impressions taken of Valiantine's little finger—The medium searched—The stain found on his elbow—He cannot explain—Cross-examination—Valiantine collapses.*

Friday, February 27, 1931.

ON the morning of Thursday, February 26, Mr. Jaquin called at my office in Bond Street, and together we scrutinized the imprints which were obtained on the smoked paper on the Wednesday evening.

One of the three imprints appeared to indicate the markings of an elbow joint. I asked Mr. Jaquin to have photographs taken, and also to have enlargements made of the elbow joint marking. The other two skin impressions it was found impossible to place.

Mr. Jaquin and I discussed very carefully the method of procedure for the imprint sitting which was to be held on the Friday night. We deemed it necessary to obtain further irrefutable proof of any conscious fraudulent action on the part of Valiantine if such were attempted. Mr. Jaquin suggested that he should prepare his sheets of smoked paper beforehand, and treat them with aniline dye, and that he should also make up a tin of modelling wax prepared with Methylene Green, for Mr. Sykes to bring with him.

It was arranged that Mr. Jaquin and I should meet at Mr. Sykes's studio at 5 o'clock on the Friday evening, in order that the three of us might have a consultation, and test the prepared smoked paper and modelling wax, and mutually agree beforehand upon the subsequent procedure.

It had been previously arranged not to hold a sitting on the Thursday evening, as, in any case, it would be necessary to give Valiantine a rest from holding séances night after night.

It must be understood that, even after the Doyle

sitting, he still appeared to be puzzled and worried in his manner.

On the Thursday night I took him and my wife to dinner at a West End restaurant, and afterwards Mr. Sykes had invited us to call in at his flat on our way home. During dinner I told Valiantine that the imprints obtained on the Wednesday evening were extraordinarily interesting, and that Mr. Jaquin said they were quite unlike any others which had been obtained. It is significant, however, again to note that he did not once ask the question, "Are they like Doyle's?" To put his mind at rest, as he was still likely to be pondering over the toe imprints, I casually said, "Of course one can get any number of different impressions from the same finger-prints—it all depends upon the angle at which the finger is placed."

During dinner, and afterwards, when we visited Mr. Sykes, Valiantine gradually became quite happy and jolly in his manner, and this mood we all did our best to encourage.

Prior to seeing Mr. Sykes on the following evening, Mr. Jaquin called on me at my office and told me that he thought that to use smoked paper prepared with the aniline dye would be very difficult, as the slightest touch would leave a mark on any of the sitters. It would need to be so carefully handled when placed before the sitting that Valiantine's suspicions might easily be aroused. It would also have a slight difference in appearance to the ordinary smoked paper.

I did not like to give up the idea, which would furnish the proof of a temporary indelible stain if touched by Valiantine. Therefore, on our way to Mr. Sykes's flat we purchased some aniline dyes, and Mr. Sykes, Mr. Jaquin and myself experimented with them. Eventually we decided that it would be too doubtful to use a dye on the smoked papers, especially as each of the sitters would have to append their signatures just before the sitting commenced. Valiantine might also notice that the papers had been brought down beforehand. So we decided that we would use the ordinary paper, smoked as before in the presence of Valiantine, and rely upon the modelling wax which Mr. Jaquin had prepared in the cigarette tin. This Mr. Jaquin had prepared with plasticine, on the top of which he had smeared a thick coating of finger-print ink, which was then sprinkled with Methylene Green. This preparation, in its first

condition, had an unusual mottled appearance, but Mr. Sykes managed to treat it in such a way that we were satisfied it would not be likely to arouse suspicion.

It was essential that every care should be used. Valiantine had been acquainted with the fact that there was a certain similarity to his toe-print in the séance impressions obtained on the Monday evening, and I had, therefore, experienced a very difficult time for four days in building up and restoring his confidence. As this would probably be the last sitting held with him, I did not want any hitch or flaw in the proceedings, and the last thing I wanted was a blank sitting at which nothing happened and nothing further could be proved, and of such a result there was a very distinct possibility. I told Mr. Sykes and Mr. Jaquin that in my opinion it was most unlikely that Valiantine would again attempt to use his toe-prints, and that if he again attempted fraud we must be prepared for him using any part of his anatomy.

It was arranged between us that if it were discovered, when the sitting was over, that the prepared wax in the tin was touched, then we must determine that, by excuse, or by insistence, Valiantine should be made to strip, in order to see whether there were any markings of the Methylene Green on any part of his body.

After our discussion, just as we were leaving to motor down to Dorincourt, Mr. Sykes, as a quick afterthought, went back to his studio and brought with him a piece of his own sculptor's modelling wax. His reasons for this will be seen later.

We arrived at Dorincourt at about 7 o'clock, and each of us endeavoured to make the atmosphere a light and merry one. We did not discuss psychics at all during the half-hour before dinner, and Valiantine was happy and laughing, and thoroughly enjoying his cocktails. At dinner champagne was served. Valiantine, when he is staying with me at my home, or when he is dining elsewhere, on the occasions I have been present, always takes a little wine. At first, when the butler was about to serve him, he said: "I don't think I'll take any"—and then, quite soon afterwards: "I think I *will* take a little champagne."

The dinner passed off pleasantly, and Valiantine was in the best of moods, roaring with laughter at some of his own simple jokes. By this I do not mean to suggest for one moment that Valiantine was in any way

intoxicated; nor has he, to my knowledge, ever been so. He is a moderately abstemious man, and had no more drink on this evening than he has taken on other occasions. It is essential to make this clear, because although certain preparations had been made, no undue influence was used, and any fraud he might be inclined to perpetrate would be conscious and deliberate.

The smoked paper was prepared by Mr. Jaquin in front of Valiantine, over a candle in the drawing-room. Mr. Sykes, in his gentle and pleasant way, casually said to Valiantine, showing him the tin of wax prepared with Methylene Green, "George, I have prepared a slightly softer modelling wax, feel it"—and handed him, *not* the tin, but the piece of sculptor's modelling wax which he had, at the last moment, put in his pocket before coming to my house. This clever, and, in the circumstances, quite justifiable piece of subtlety, diverted Valiantine's attention from the prepared tin, and he was, for a moment, absorbed in his interest in the pliability of Mr. Sykes's piece of wax.

Valiantine's manner before the sitting commenced was confidently self-possessed.

The sitting commenced just after 9 o'clock. Mr. Jaquin placed one sheet of smoked paper on the writing-pad on top of the coffin stool, and one sheet underneath the stool. Mr. Sykes placed the tin of prepared plasticine by the side of the blotting-pad on the top of the stool.

The lights were switched off, and, after a gramophone record had been played, Valiantine said the Lord's Prayer. In view of what transpired this seemed a somewhat ironic procedure.

The sitting lasted a little over an hour. The few "voices" which spoke, said only a few words. What they enunciated was practically of no account. There existed throughout a somewhat satiric atmosphere. I have experienced many hundreds of sittings, during which one's psychic faculties are developed to a highly sensitive degree. On this night the room was dead. There were long pauses. Only five "voices" attempted to speak. Three of these were "Guides" and two others were alleged personalities. None spoke more than a dozen words. During the hour or so we sat the staccato sentences from the "voices" could not have occupied more than three minutes of the entire time. First "Bert Everett" spoke a word or two, and then there

was a curt greeting from Dr. Barnett. Later, during the evening, these two "voices" alternated occasionally, speaking a noncommittal sentence or so.

The "voice" of "Pat O'Brien," using the luminous trumpet, spoke a word or two to each of the circle. Mr. Jaquin intervened with the remark, "Pat, can spirits see in the dark?" The luminous trumpet went straight over to Mr. Jaquin, and replied: "To be sure, or how could they see to give imprints?"

I would like to interpolate here that the "Pat O'Brien voice" which made this statement was the characteristic "voice" of "Pat O'Brien" which had manifested on so many occasions for several years, and the words were delivered in a natural manner, with a note of genuineness.

Just near the end of the sitting the "Bert Everett voice" spoke in shrill tones, apparently from high up in the room, and saying: "Segrave is here." There was a further lengthy pause, and then the "Bert Everett voice" shrilly emitted: "Exquisite!" The intonation and the syllables of this one word on this particular evening struck me as being peculiar. The tone in which this word was spoken sounded, to me, not merely satiric, but contemptuous. I immediately asked the question:

H.D.B.: *What is exquisite? Do you mean that we have got an imprint through?*

"BERT EVERETT": Yes.

H.D.B.: Whose?

"BERT EVERETT": Segrave's.

A little later on the "Bert Everett voice" spoke a few words, addressing Mrs. Sykes as "Blondy."

There was then a further pause, during which a gramophone record was played. Then the luminous trumpet was lifted, and a husky "voice" announced itself as "Segrave." Mr. Jaquin at once interposed, and said, "Good evening, Sir Henry; I am pleased you are here." The luminous trumpet floated over towards Mr. Jaquin and the "voice" answered the greeting. Mr. Jaquin then said, "Do you remember, Sir Henry, giving me an impression of your hand in S— W—'s flat?" (The name was mentioned in full.) The "voice" replied faintly: "Yes."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jaquin then asked: "Do you

<sup>1</sup> It should here be mentioned that when Mr. Jaquin invited this affirmative reply, he knew that he had not taken Sir Henry Segrave's hand imprints at this particular place. It would have been far wiser had he asked: "Where did you give me your hand imprints?" That question would have called for an effective reply.

**Exhibit No. 15**

'A photograph of the smoked paper as found after the séance on Friday, February 27, 1931. There are several impressions of elbow joints, a finger impression, and also skin ridge markings. During this séance it was alleged that an imprint has been given by the late Sir Henry Segrave.

[to face page 358.

EXHIBIT NO. 15.

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Examined \_\_\_\_\_  
by \_\_\_\_\_

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remember that you promised that if ever you passed to the other side you would try and give me an impression of your thumb?" The "voice" replied "Yes," and said he "was trying." It is peculiar that the "voice" said it was "trying," since previously the "Bert Everett" voice had said in reply to a question of mine that an impression *had been* obtained which was Segrave's, earlier in the evening.

The "Segrave voice" only spoke half a dozen words or so in all, and most of these were mere affirmative replies, such as "Yes."

There was another pause, and then, using the luminous trumpet, and announcing itself as "Abraham Wallace," a "voice" addressed me. He spoke a word or two to me regarding psychic books. Mr. Jaquin then asked the "voice," "Do you remember Dr. Munro?" He replied "Yes." Mr. Jaquin asked if there was any message he would like to give to Dr. Munro, and the "voice" replied "Yes, tell him to look after my books." This "Abraham Wallace voice" occupied a period of only about thirty seconds. When the luminous trumpet dropped, Valiantine asked: "What was the name?" This was a somewhat absurd inquiry, because the "voice" had announced itself clearly and distinctly as "Abraham Wallace," and, of course, Valiantine had met the late Dr. Abraham Wallace and had held two or three sittings with him a year or so before his death.

There was a pause, during which a gramophone record was played, and then "Dr. Barnett" closed the sitting.

The sitting lasted about an hour and a quarter. When the lights were switched on, it was discovered that on the smoked sheet on top of the stool there were several imprints, one of which was apparently a finger. (See Exhibit No. 15, p. 358.) I cautioned all the sitters, who were naturally bending over to examine it, that on no account must the paper be touched, and I asked Mr. Jaquin to fix it immediately, saying that there would be plenty of time for examination afterwards.

Mr. Jaquin fixed the smoked paper with a solution in the séance room, and it was then placed on one side to dry. On the prepared wax in the tin there were distinct indentations. (See Exhibit No. 16, p. 360.) What these impressions were it was impossible to determine with the naked eye. Mr. Sykes closed the lid and placed the box on top of a book-case. The smoked paper dried in a

minute or two, and was then examined by all those present.

Mrs. Sykes and Mrs. Bradley then left us.

Mr. Sykes, Mr. Jaquin, Valiantine and myself then each examined the imprints closely in turn under magnifying glasses. I remarked casually, but with a purpose, that they were certainly quite different from those obtained at the previous "imprint sittings," and added, also with design, "If it can be proved that these imprints could not be made by anyone who was present in this room to-night, then it will be possible to assume that they are supernormal." I stated that we must take every precaution to ensure absolute proof. This afforded Mr. Jaquin the opportunity to suggest that he should take the impression of the whole foot of Valiantine. To this Valiantine readily agreed, and Mr. Jaquin then took the impressions of both of his feet, including the heels. The object of this was to discover if there were any signs of a stain of Methylene Green. I did not anticipate that there would be. Assuming a very ordinary craftiness on the part of Valiantine, it did not appear to me logical that he would be likely, in view of what had happened previously, to repeat the same type of fraudulent performance. It was useful, however, for Mr. Jaquin to obtain further imprints of Valiantine's feet for the purpose of comparison with the imprints which had been previously obtained.

While his feet imprints were being taken Valiantine showed a slight sense of resentment, and said that if his feet imprints had to be taken, then the feet imprints of every other sitter should be taken also. While we were discussing this, and Valiantine was replacing his laced shoes and socks, Mr. Jaquin left the room for a moment or so. He then returned with the photographic enlargements of the séance imprints obtained on Monday, February 22, and also the photographic enlargement of Valiantine's big left toe. He confronted Valiantine with them, saying: "How do you explain this?"

In view of the happenings which had occurred at the sitting which had just finished on this evening (Friday, February 27) I consider that Mr. Jaquin was too precipitate in his action. I did not interfere in any way, because, although Mr. Jaquin and Mr. Valiantine were both getting slightly excited, I maintained throughout the attitude and mentality of a calm observer. It was essential for me to record all the facts. Trivialities

EXHIBIT NO. 16



EXHIBIT No. 16.

A photograph of the surface of the specially prepared plasticine as found after the séance at Dorincourt on Friday, Feb. 27th, 1931. There are three clear indentations ; these are marked by the white arrows.

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may occasionally excite me because of their irritation, but when the moment arrives for essentials to be considered the effect on me has always been to foster an aloof perspective in order to obtain a clearer and more penetrative survey.

Since it was unknown to Valiantine that the identity of his toe-print with the séance print had been definitely proved, it was perhaps natural that Mr. Jaquin appeared to concentrate entirely on this *one* point to the exclusion of the vitally interesting imprints lying on my desk, which had been obtained at the séance only just concluded. In addition, the tin of modelling wax was lying apparently forgotten on my book-case.

I interposed, and stopped the slight argument between Mr. Jaquin and Valiantine. I said that it was necessary for us to consider the imprints which had just been obtained.

We all examined them again, and in view of the fact that Mr. Jaquin was of the opinion that one of the séance impressions was that of a little finger, we suggested that impressions must be taken of Valiantine's little fingers. Valiantine assented to this quite readily, and Mr. Jaquin then took them and fixed the imprints. (See Exhibit No. 17, p. 362.)

The imprints of Valiantine's fingers, as taken, were certainly shorter than that of the séance imprint. This, however, might have possibly been explained by the stretching of the joints. Mr. Jaquin then asked Valiantine whether he could explain the resemblance. Valiantine replied confidently and firmly, but with genuine heat: "That is *not* my little finger." Jaquin then remarked that it was "suspiciously like it," to which Valiantine angrily replied, "I'll bet you two hundred pounds that it is not my little finger." Mr. Jaquin was slightly nonplussed by this, and did not pursue the point. Valiantine was peculiarly emphatic when he made this remark; so much so that he really appeared confident that it was *not his* little finger, and that this could not be proved. I observed that there was a very considerable difference between the length of the "Segrave" séance finger imprint (see Exhibit No. 15, p. 358) and that of George Valiantine's little finger imprints, taken by Mr. Jaquin, and shown in Exhibit No. 17 (see p. 362).

Mr. Jaquin then added to Valiantine, "If it is not your finger then probably you have a dummy finger in your pocket." Valiantine became indignant at this,

*Exhibit No. 17*

*Normal imprints taken by Mr. Jaquin of George Valiantine's right hand little finger after the séance, on February 27, 1931.*

Exhibit No. 17.

[to face page 302.]



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and said: "You can search me." This gave me the opportunity of suggesting to Valiantine that for his own sake the best thing for him to do was to strip and submit to being searched. Valiantine at once agreed, saying: "You can strip me—I don't mind being searched if you agree that everyone else is stripped and searched afterwards." To this we all assented. Valiantine then took off his jacket, waistcoat and trousers, and I asked Mr. Jaquin to undertake a search of Valiantine's pockets. The pockets contained only the usual objects a man carries. I remembered afterwards, however, that Mr. Jaquin had omitted to examine Valiantine's pocket handkerchief, which, of course, might have shown traces of the wiping away of the marks of the smoked paper. This omission was unfortunate, because a search for all possible traces was particularly essential, having regard to Valiantine's emphatic challenge that the smoked paper imprint was not his.

Proceeding with his search, Mr. Jaquin then rolled back the shirt sleeve of Valiantine's right arm. There were no concealments and no markings. Rolling back the shirt sleeve of the left arm, on the elbow was discovered *a large stain of the preparation of the finger-print ink and Methylene Green*. The stain was pointed out to Valiantine and he was asked to explain it. He looked at it, appeared somewhat staggered, and then said: "I just can't explain it. What it is I don't know, or how it got there." I then told him that the tin of modelling wax had been specially prepared with Methylene Green, and that this stain was a proof that he had used his elbow to make the séance imprint. I told him to put on his clothes and we would discuss the matter. In turn we asked him if he had any explanation to give of the smoked imprint, and of the stain. In reply to our questions he merely continued to insist that he had never used his toes, and that the only way he could account for the stain on his elbow was that his ectoplasm must have absorbed the Methylene Green and when it returned to his body had left the stain on his elbow. To the majority of questions which were put to him, Valiantine had one stock reply, "I can't explain."

We questioned him at considerable length, and he then showed signs of breaking down. Rising from his chair, he said in a broken voice, "I can't stand it any longer. I can't stand it—let me go." I told

him quite gently, but firmly, that he must not go to bed until he had given us an explanation. He still seemed to trust and rely on my help. He sat down again, but after a few more questions he collapsed utterly and burst into a violent fit of sobbing. His whole body shook convulsively, and when the sobbing subsided he became unconscious. His eyes closed and his body shook with violent trembling; he gasped for breath. It was apparently a fit of nervous hysteria. Mr. Sykes at once suggested that cold water bandages should be applied to his head. This was done: Mr. Sykes applying the bandages while Mr. Jaquin continued to re-soak the towels every few minutes. Valiantine remained in this condition for nearly two hours. During this time his heart beat was extremely rapid, and, by the signs of congestion shown in his face, his blood pressure was evidently high. His pulse was extremely rapid and intermittent. At one time, shortly before he recovered consciousness, Mr. Jaquin said that he thought his condition was such that he was certainly in danger of a stroke. It was about 2 a.m. when he recovered, and then I took him up to his room. He was in a distressed condition, but was just able to walk upstairs with my help, hanging on to me with his arm round my neck. He thanked me for helping him, speaking in heart-broken tones, almost like a child. He sat limply on his bed, his eyes looking into space, and, not as if he were addressing me, he said, in broken tones: "Why did they do this to me? Why did they do this to me?" These words were said in a manner difficult to describe. Strange as it may seem, I do not think that he meant by "*they*" to refer to Mr. Jaquin or to Mr. Sykes, to me, or to any of us. Valiantine was in such a distraught condition, and evidently so weak and ill, that it was only merciful for me to give him a few words of comfort. I told him to try and ease his mind and get some sleep. He threw his arms round me and embraced me.

After leaving Valiantine I rejoined the others. Mrs. Bradley and Mrs. Sykes had remained in the drawing-room since the close of the séance at about 10.30 and, of course, they had no part in any of the proceedings which had taken place since then.

Later on Mr. and Mrs. Sykes motored back to town, and Mr. Jaquin, as had been arranged, spent the night at Dorincourt.

## CHAPTER X

### FUTILE DENIALS

*The next day—The evidence of the photographs—I discuss his future with Valiantine—He again collapses.*

Saturday, February 28, 1931.

ON the following morning Valiantine was up to breakfast, and, although he looked jaded and anxious, he had evidently recovered from his fit of nervous hysteria. He was quiet and reserved in his manner, and said very little.

Mr. Jaquin left immediately after breakfast, taking with him the smoked séance sheet and the tin of prepared wax, and also Valiantine's finger and foot prints. These were photographed and enlarged during the next few days, and I received them after Valiantine had left me. The enlargements show that the majority of the imprints on the smoked paper are of elbows. (See Exhibit No. 18, page 366, and also Exhibit No. 19, page 368.) For comparison with the alleged supernormal finger-print obtained on the same sheet, see Exhibit No. 21, page 388, which contains two photographic enlargements of Valiantine's right hand middle finger and the alleged supernormal finger. It must here be stated that it was only after a very careful examination had been made some time later, at my request, by ex-Chief Inspector W. T. Bell, that he discovered a similarity between the séance finger-print and the right side of the middle finger of Valiantine's right hand.

I had an appointment on this Saturday morning at 12 o'clock in London for a major operation on my teeth under an anaesthetic, which I had deferred on account of Valiantine's visit. I was not feeling particularly fit, and refused to enter upon the incidents of the previous evening with Valiantine. It was, however, necessary for me briefly to discuss his future arrangements. He was due on the following Tuesday to fulfil his engagement for a series of twelve sittings with Dr. Vivian in Hampshire. I told Valiantine that I should not allow him to go there. Dr. Vivian had previously paid Valiantine

his fee of £200, and this cheque he had cashed. I told him that the money must be returned at once, and that he had better give it to me and I would send her a cheque. This Valiantine did, handing me the money in English and American notes.

Valiantine had an engagement in town for luncheon, and I told him that I would discuss everything fully with him at 5 o'clock that afternoon. The luncheon appointment was with Mr. X at his club in London.

Since Mr. X was Valiantine's chief, and most wealthy, patron, with whom he was again to sit for a few days before he returned to America, it was of paramount importance to Valiantine to know what action I should take with Mr. X in regard to the discoveries which had been made. I told Valiantine in the morning that until I had fully considered and re-discussed these incidents with him alone it would be better for him to make no reference to what had occurred while lunching with Mr. X, and that I would decide what was the right course of action later in the afternoon. My object in this was, firstly, that I desired to place the full facts, with the photographs, in front of Mr. X myself; and, secondly, that I thought there was still the possibility of extracting a full explanation from Valiantine. Valiantine agreed to this at once; his attitude was, on this morning, subdued; he was extremely meek and mild. He said, "Herbert, I'll leave everything to you. I'll do anything you say."

At 11.30 Mrs. Bradley, myself and Valiantine went to London, and we dropped Valiantine at the hotel at which Mr. X was staying. I then went on to have my mouth operated on, and had far pleasanter dreams than I had experienced for some little time. Incidentally, it is said that no one can remember their dreams under ether. I have previously had bets with anæsthetists on this and have always lost, because when consciousness returned the dream has always disappeared. On this occasion, however, I retained a conscious memory of a considerable part of the latter proportion of the dream, even to the words spoken, which I retailed to my dentist and to the doctor, during intervals of spitting up blood.

I slept an hour or so in the afternoon, and, on waking, found that Valiantine had returned from his luncheon appointment quite early. After tea I took him to my study and again tried to obtain an explanation. I

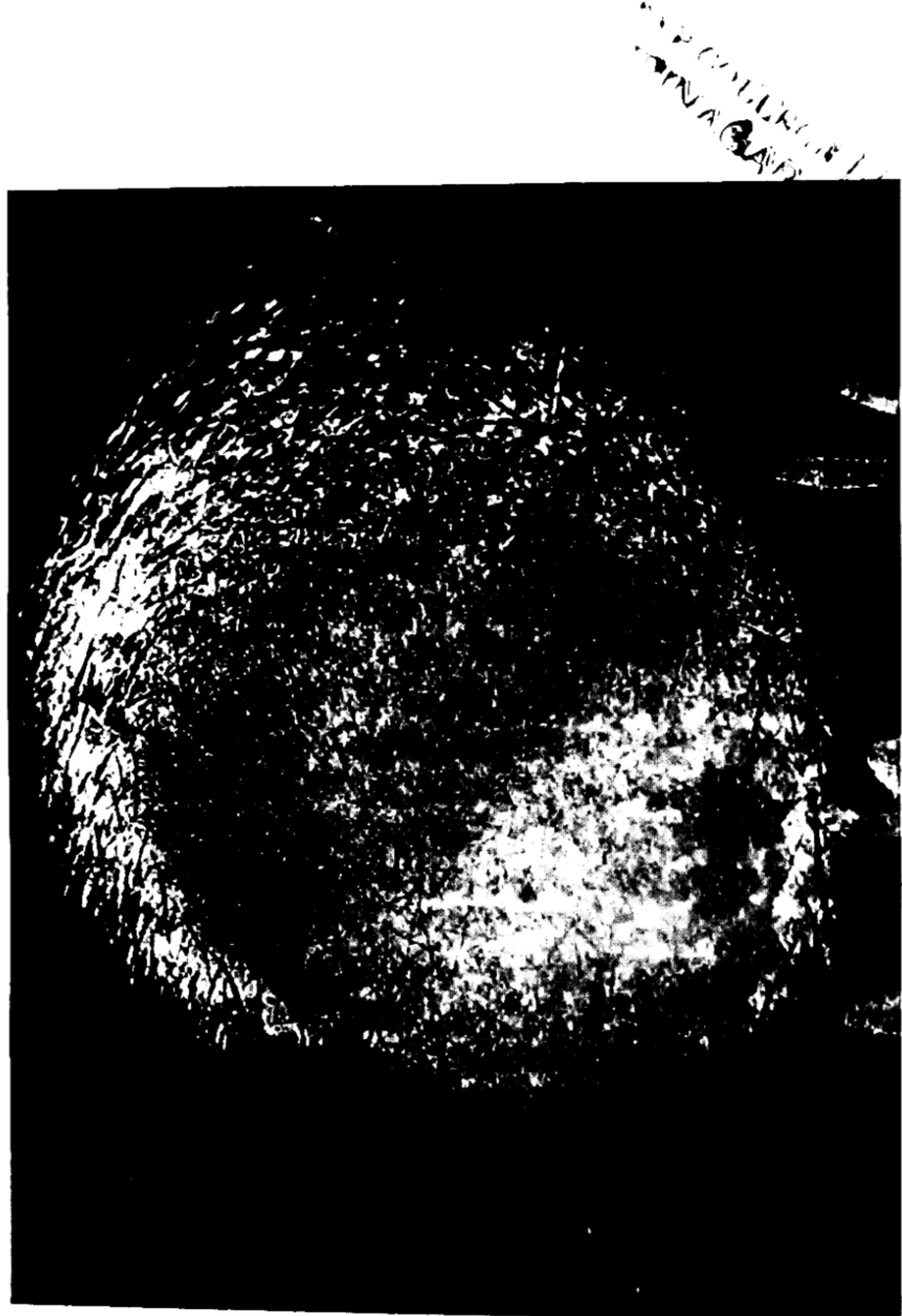


EXHIBIT No. 18.

An enlargement of one of the elbow impressions found on the smoked paper in Exhibit No. 15.

[to face page 366.]

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understand human nature fairly well, and this was not the first time I have had to deal with fraudulent actions on the part of those whom I have befriended. I have a certain understanding of such frailties, and my experience in life, entirely apart from psychics, has perhaps tinged my nature with a somewhat bitterly humorous satirism. This does not matter, so long as my humour overtops the bitterness.

Whilst taking tea with Valiantine and Mrs. Bradley, Valiantine was solicitous and humble in his manner; wondering whether my jaw was troubling me—which it was not. When he was alone with me I said that it would only be possible for me to help him if he told me everything. I said that I knew the truth of genuine phenomena, and that I knew the proofs of fraud. I told him also that I knew by my long experience that at séances genuine phenomena was often interspersed with conscious or unconscious fraud. I alluded to my experiences when genuine phenomena had occurred and yet at the same time the "voice" phenomena had obviously been produced by impersonating entities. I recounted to him certain experiences when evil influences had affected the results. All this I did in the endeavour to obtain from him a frank admission of what had inspired his fraudulent actions. We talked for an hour, but he was adamant. I tackled him with the definite proofs which we held in evidence against him, but his reply never varied. Time after time he said, "I can't explain it." I told him that it was unquestionably proved that he had committed conscious and deliberate fraud, but he obstinately refused to admit this. I then informed him that I considered it my duty to inform Mr. X of what had transpired and to supply him with the full details, which, I added, I should do on the Monday morning, as Mr. X was spending that week-end in London.

Realizing my determination, Valiantine ended the discussion by saying, "When do you want me to go?" This remark, quite suddenly put, as if considered beforehand, somewhat surprised me, and I asked, "Where can you go?" He replied, "I can go to Southampton, and stay in an hotel there."

Incidentally, Southampton is within an hour or so's motoring distance of Mr. X's country estate. When Valiantine asked me when I expected him to go, he apparently seemed to think that he would be asked to

leave my house at once. I had no intention of demanding this.

The arrangements previously made were that he should leave Dorincourt on the Monday, spend the night at Mr. X's country house, and then motor over to fulfil his engagements with Doctor Vivian, and afterwards return to Mr. X's house for two days before sailing for Southampton on March 18. I told him that he could stay with me at Dorincourt, as had been originally arranged, until Monday, when he could meet Mr. X and travel back with him to his house and spend the night there, and that I would go with him to town to meet Mr. X.

Valiantine, I think, until now, had been under the impression that I would not tell Mr. X what had happened. It must be remembered that on his previous visit to England, when he gave sittings for a month at Mr. X's house, he had received a fee of £1,500, in addition to lavish travelling expenses, etc., which amounted to several hundred pounds more.

I asked Valiantine whether Mr. X had as yet paid him any money on account of the five weeks' services he had recently rendered him. He replied that he had not, as it was usual for Mr. X to give him a draft on the day he sailed.

The position for Valiantine was obviously a serious one, and would affect him very considerably financially.

I allowed Valiantine to have no illusions whatever regarding my informing Mr. X. I told him frankly that when I saw Mr. X on the Monday morning I should show him the photographs and imprints which I had in my possession, and tell him exactly what had taken place. I also told Valiantine that the best thing for him to do would be to return to America by the first available boat. He said he could not do this, as his Cunard booking was for March 18 and there was not another boat. I knew that was absurd, and at once telephoned the Cunard Company, who informed me that a boat was sailing on the 4th, and that they would be quite willing to exchange Valiantine's ticket for a cabin on the boat sailing on that date.

I then telephoned Doctor Vivian and told her that Valiantine would be unable to fulfil his engagement, as he was compelled to return to America on the following Wednesday. I could not, of course, give her any further particulars over the telephone. Valiantine was quite

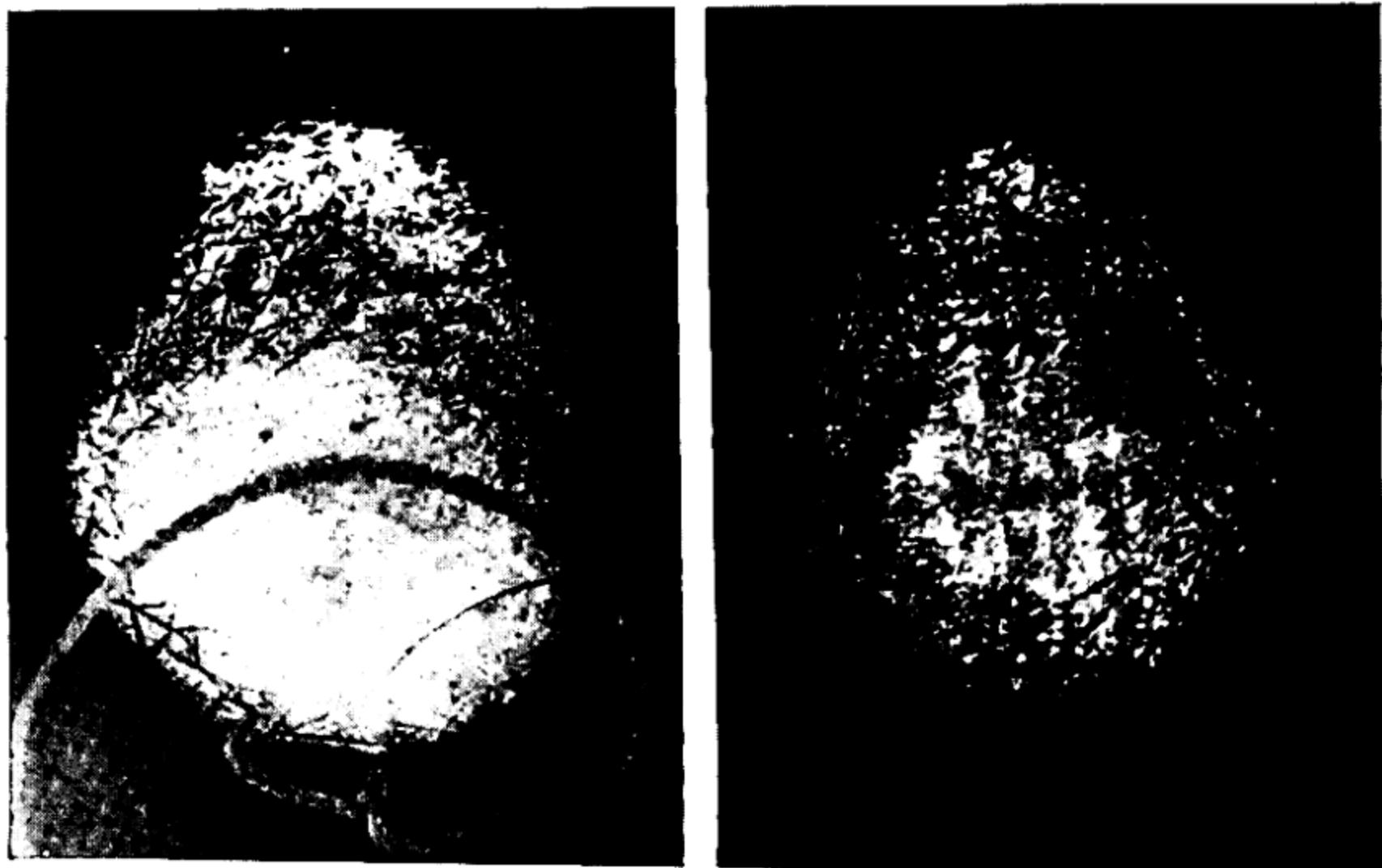


EXHIBIT No. 19.

The left-hand photograph is an enlargement of the elbow impression in Exhibit No. 14. The right-hand photograph is an enlargement of a normal elbow impression, showing the characteristic markings. No digital impression would show any such characteristic markings as in the alleged super-normal imprint on the left.

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content to leave all arrangements in my hands. He was still extremely upset and frightened.

*Sunday, March 1, 1931.*

On the following Sunday morning, while I was out walking, Valiantine telephoned Mr. X, and I am under the impression that in some way he prepared Mr. X for his interview with me, and, in all probability, concocted some sort of version of his own in order to forestall the exposure. Possibly in the endeavour to prejudice Mr. X against me.

Throughout the day Valiantine still maintained that he was innocent. During the afternoon he asked to be allowed to see the photographs which had been taken of the various imprints. I told him that I should prefer, first of all, to show them to Mr. X, but eventually I consented and brought them down to him in a heap. There were two copies of each. I took out the enlarged séance imprints and also the imprint enlargements of his own toes. He took up two of these and then for a short time examined them through a magnifying glass. Then he said, determinedly, "These are not the same." Unfortunately, the two photographs he had picked up were duplicate copies of his own left toe. This was the first humorous incident of the last few days. The copies were, of course, marked, and I pointed this out to him. After this he discontinued the examination.

At one period during this Sunday, knowing that it was my intention of informing Mr. X and also, knowing my character so well, that I should, probably, later on publish the whole facts, Valiantine said to me, in rather pathetic tones, "What shall I do?" I replied, somewhat wearily, "Go out and work, like I and many other people have to do."

After dinner I again discussed the exposure of fraud with Valiantine. I gave him the loophole of admitting partial obsession, or the excuse of unconscious fraud, but all to no avail. He steadily maintained, "I did not do anything, and I can't explain it." I said that if he could not explain it then his "Guides" should be able to do so, and offered him the opportunity of holding a sitting. I wanted to see if by any chance something fresh would happen. He rather apathetically consented. We sat for a short time, but, of course, nothing happened. In the circumstances it was hardly to be expected.

Afterwards, for the last time, I again pressed Valantine for some explanation. I advanced the argument that if, as he maintained, he had not committed conscious fraud, since no one else in the room was responsible, then the fraudulent imprints, on his own statements, must have been perpetrated by evil spirits, since some of his "Guides" had made what we had proved to be lying assertions. This argument rather disturbed Valantine. He would not accept it, and said, in a strangely genuine tone, "I will never say a word against them." I argued with him that on the proven facts and logical deductions, so far as he was concerned, it had to be one of two things. Either he was genuine and his "Guides" were occasionally fraudulent, or his "Guides" were genuine and he was occasionally fraudulent. I put it in this way to lead him on, but it had no effect. I gave him the choice of confessing his own guilt and defending spirit phenomena, or maintaining his innocence and condemning such phenomena as malicious and evil. But the logic of this made no impression. He never wavered in his denial of personal guilt. Eventually late in the evening he broke down again into half sobbing tones, so I sent him to bed.

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CHAPTER XI

PROOFS OF FRAUD

Valiantine, Mrs. Bradley and I interview Mr. X—No surprise—Inclined to defend Valiantine—Valiantine becomes truculent—He lies—Another expert opinion decided on—The Stinson imprint—Valiantine lies about the "Doyle" voice—Dr. Vivian—Mr. Jaquin—I consult Scotland Yard—Mr. Bell, ex-Chief Inspector of the Finger-print Bureau—His report conclusive—The "Stinson" imprint found to be fraudulent—Sittings with Dr. Vivian.

I

Monday, March 2, 1931.

AFTER breakfast Valiantine's luggage was put on my car, and he, Mrs. Bradley, and myself motored up to London to meet Mr. X at his club. On the short ten-mile journey Valiantine was quiet and reserved, very evidently considering the effect of my relation of the disturbing facts to Mr. X.

When the four of us met in Mr. X's club I described in as brief terms as possible all that had happened. I showed Mr. X the photographs I had brought with me. I told him that as he had sponsored Valiantine I considered it my immediate duty to give him every detail. He received all I had to say in a somewhat cold manner. He exhibited not the slightest surprise, and I am inclined to think that he was not unprepared for what I told him. I showed him the various photographs, and at once he said that they did not necessarily prove fraud on the part of Valiantine; with regard to the stain on his elbow, he suggested that this might have been caused by the return of the ectoplasm to the medium's body. Mr. X then related to me the case of an experience of his, where imprints of a similar kind had been obtained at a séance, and afterwards, on examination, the marks of the smoked paper were discovered on the medium's stomach. I did not argue this point with him. I merely said that it was unquestionable that Valiantine's toe-prints coincided with some of the séance imprints, and that leaving the stain of Methylene Green—prepared for the express purpose of detecting fraud—on a

medium's elbow seemed to me a very strange form of spirit manifestation.

Directly Valantine found that Mr. X was inclined to defend and support him, his whole manner changed. He was evidently relieved, and at once gained confidence. He said that the conditions under which these "imprint sittings" were held at Dorincourt were bad. Valantine attacked Mr. Jaquin in particular, saying that as a sitter he had an adverse influence. He said that this accounted for the results being mixed. Seeing that I was determined to tell Mr. X everything, Valantine became aggressive to me; a vivid contrast to the nervous timidity he had shown towards me during the week-end. He denied point blank many of the proved facts. He lied deliberately and desperately, and at this time I am almost inclined to think that Mr. X believed Valantine more than he believed me. It appeared to me futile to continue the discussion at further length.

I told Mr. X that I had considered it my duty to inform him of the facts, and that, having done so, I must leave Valantine in his hands, and that he could act in any way he considered fit. I offered to leave the copies of the photographs with him, in order that he might take them away and study them at his leisure, and as Valantine was returning with him he also would have an opportunity of studying them together with Mr. X. At first, such was his confidence in Valantine, Mr. X was not inclined to take the photographs. Later, however, he agreed to do so. Mr. X said that, in any case, he would not accept the opinion of Mr. Jaquin on them, but that he would require expert opinion. I told him that I should be very pleased if he would do so and that, in any case, it was my intention also to obtain further expert analysis, as I regarded this necessary for confirmation. At the same time, I added, I had but little doubt as to the result.

Mr. X informed me that during the month Valantine had been staying with him smoked paper had been used at one or two séances, and that an imprint had been obtained, which was alleged to be a finger-print of Walter Stinson. Walter Stinson, it may be mentioned, is the chief "control" of the famous medium, "Margery" (Mrs. Crandon), the wife of Dr. Crandon of Boston. At the "Margery" sittings held in Boston several imprints have been obtained alleged to be those of Walter Stinson (Margery's deceased brother). Some

of these are said to compare favourably with that of the only imprint in existence of Walter Stinson. This, it is stated, was obtained *after* his death from a razor blade used by him *before* he died. An impression such as this, obtained *after* the death of a person, from an instrument which in daily use may have been handled by many persons, cannot, to my mind, claim any authenticity as being the skin impressions of Walter Stinson, since no imprints were ever taken of Walter Stinson's hands or fingers *when he was alive*.

Mr. X told me that he had posted photographs of the alleged "Walter Stinson finger" obtained under Valiantine's mediumship to Dr. Crandon for comparison, but had not, at this time, received a reply from Dr. Crandon. I said that I should be very interested indeed to see this imprint, and he replied that as he was coming to London on the following Friday week, March 13, he would bring a copy with him, and would at the same time return to me my own batch of photographs. I told him that, if he wished, I would arrange for Mr. Jaquin to be present, in order that he also might be shown the finger imprints. I added that Mr. X might then ask Mr. Jaquin any questions he wished regarding the Dorincourt séance imprints.

Reverting to Valiantine's position, I told Mr. X that I had felt compelled to cancel Valiantine's visit to Dr. Vivian, and that I had telephoned her to this effect. Also, that I had told Valiantine I considered it would be desirable for him to return to America on the following Wednesday. Mr. X disagreed, and said that he did not consider that I had the right to cancel Dr. Vivian's series of sittings, and that such a decision should be left to her. I told him that I could not consent to Valiantine going there and accepting a fee of £200 unless she were previously informed of the complete facts, and this could only be done personally. Mr. X then suggested that Mrs. Bradley should travel down that afternoon to his country house, spend the night there and motor over the following morning to see Dr. Vivian and give her the full particulars. This Mrs. Bradley agreed to do.

Just before my interview with Mr. X ended, by chance he told me that "Doyle" had been through in the "voice" during the Valiantine sittings held at his house, and that Doyle had said he was going to try and get his thumb-prints through at Dorincourt. At once

I remarked that the "Doyle voice" at Dorincourt had definitely stated: "This is the first time I have got through in this way." Valiantine immediately denied this, saying, "He did not say so." When he uttered this deliberate lie I think the look I gave him may possibly have scorched his soul.

This was the last I saw of Valiantine, and it is not likely that I shall ever see him again.

## II

Mrs. Bradley saw Dr. Vivian on Tuesday, March 3, and told her everything that had occurred. Dr. Vivian is a very charming and extremely intelligent woman. She has an exceptionally well-balanced mind, and, as I have stated, a very extensive knowledge of psychics and the varying forms of mediumship. She took the view that a great number of genuine mediums had been discovered from time to time in spasmodic phases of fraud. She said that she had made all arrangements with some other doctors, and one or two outside sitters, for a series with Valiantine, and that, despite the discovery already made, she would still prefer that Valiantine should fulfil his engagement. She had read the records of Valiantine's work, and was of the opinion that it was quite possible that she would be able to obtain a certain amount of genuine phenomena. In any case, whatever happened, the observation would be useful to her and to her fellow-doctors.

Mrs. Bradley telephoned Mr. X telling him of Dr. Vivian's decision and then returned to London.

So far as I was personally concerned, I felt that I had done everything that could be expected of me. I did not, therefore, consider myself in any way further responsible for Valiantine's conduct.

After leaving Mr. X and Valiantine on Monday, March 2, I met Mr. Jaquin and told him of the interview which had just taken place. I said that we should, of course, obtain further expert opinion on the imprints, and we arranged that Mr. Jaquin should go to Scotland Yard and submit the séance imprints and Valiantine's toe imprints for analysis and comparison. This he did, and the opinion, given personally, was that they were similar, but Scotland Yard said that they could not give an official opinion unless a charge of criminal fraud

were brought against Valiantine. This I was naturally not prepared to do, because, apart from the fact of knowing that Valiantine had been genuine in the past, I was not willing to make him suffer unduly on a criminal charge. Even if I had made such a harsh decision the case would have been peculiarly involved, because these events happened while Valiantine was staying as a guest in my house, and I had on this occasion paid him no money whatever for his mediumistic services.

On being informed of this, Scotland Yard recommended as one of the best experts in the country, Mr. W. T. Bell, ex-Chief Inspector in charge of the Finger-Print Bureau of New Scotland Yard. Later I got in touch with Mr. Bell, submitted the imprints to him, and obtained his report and analysis, which are recorded in Chapter XIII of this book, together with his markings of the séance imprints and Valiantine's toe-print (Exhibit No. 20, p. 386). Mr. Bell's report is so able and thorough that it should leave no shadow of doubt in the mind of the lay reader. Each of the twenty-one Exhibits have been submitted by me to Mr. Bell. I have relied upon him for expert analysis. Mr. Bell does not offer assumptions, he deals only with scientific facts.

### III

On Thursday, March 13, Mr. X called on me at my office in Bond Street, and returned my photographs. He then showed me the imprint of "Walter Stinson's finger," which had been obtained during a séance held in his own house.

Mr. X was quite charming in his manner, and had apparently made a very thorough study of the photographs which I had submitted to him. He was certainly by no means as confident of Valiantine as on the last occasion when I saw him. His difficulty was that, having had so many personal mental evidences of the genuineness of Valiantine's mediumship, he could not reconcile his experiences with the act of deliberate physical fraud which Valiantine had undoubtedly committed.

Then Mr. Jaquin joined us, and Mr. X questioned him on all the various points of the skin imprints. He discussed these in such a manner that it was obvious that he had given them intensive study. He was, I think, in the end, perfectly satisfied with the

knowledgeable, straightforward replies with which Mr. Jaquin answered each of his queries. He then handed Mr. Jaquin "Walter Stinson's finger-print" and said he would leave it with Mr. Jaquin, in order that he might examine it and give an opinion on it.

This Mr. Jaquin did later, comparing it with the impressions of Valiantine's hands which he had taken seven years ago. He found that the "Walter Stinson finger imprint" *could be identified with that of the middle finger of Valiantine's left hand.* Mr. Jaquin had a photograph taken of the "Walter Stinson imprint" and at my request Mr. W. T. Bell examined it and compared it with Valiantine's middle finger. He confirms the identification.

A week or so later, Mr. X and Mr. Jaquin and I again met in my office by appointment, and Mr. X was informed of the origin of the Walter Stinson imprint. Mr. X stipulated that the photograph of this imprint, which was his property, must not be published or used. He said that he refused to play any part whatever in publicly denouncing Valiantine. I understood his feelings and I naturally agreed. That is the only reason why an illustration of the alleged "Walter Stinson imprint" in comparison with Valiantine's middle finger imprint is not published in this book.

#### IV

Valiantine went to visit Dr. Vivian on the Tuesday morning, March 3, and remained there until Monday morning, March 16, giving in all twelve séances.

Dr. Vivian later sent me on her reports. She wrote to me on March 9, saying that although the first sitting with Valiantine was not a very good one, at subsequent sittings several "voices" had spoken, and she described the Saturday sitting (March 7) as an excellent one—sixteen "voices" having spoken. Dr. Vivian stated that "while two 'voices' were speaking, simultaneously Valiantine's voice was heard drawing the attention of the other sitters to the two voices."

Apparently at the later sittings the results were not so successful, and the intelligence of the "voices" communicating was very confused.

The last sitting of the series was held on March 13, and this was a complete blank.

Valiantine then returned to Mr. X for two days and sailed for America on March 18.

When I saw Mr. X on the Friday, March 13, he told me that he had himself made several luminous elastic bands, and that he had instructed Valiantine to wear these bands on his right and left ankles and right and left wrists. Valiantine, I may mention, has, on certain occasions, worn similar luminous bands at sittings at which I have been present. The object of this, of course, is that every movement of the medium may be checked. I asked Dr. Vivian whether Valiantine had worn luminous bands, and she told me that he had produced them on one occasion, but that afterwards he said he did not wish to wear them, as they might affect the phenomena.

After Valiantine's departure Dr. Vivian invited me to dine with her in London with Surgeon Admiral Nimmo and Dr. Reid, who had been present throughout the series with Valiantine. Both of these extremely intelligent men took an impersonal and critical view of the happenings of the series of sittings which they had attended. Although they regarded the last two séances as doubtful and negative, Surgeon Admiral Nimmo told me that during Valiantine's visit he had had two sittings with him in full daylight. The communicating "voice," which he heard coming distinctly from within the trumpet, gave intelligent and evidential communications. He was very impressed by this and arranged at the second daylight sitting for a second doctor to be present. These two doctors and Valiantine sat in a triangle, and the "voices" were again heard speaking distinctly and intelligently from the inside of the trumpet. During the whole time that these "voices" were manifesting acute observation was kept by both doctors upon Valiantine's face, in which they discovered no movement whatever.

## CHAPTER XII

### MR. NOEL JAQUIN'S REPORT ON THE IMPRINTS

*Friday, February 20, 1931.*

PRIOR to this sitting I carefully smoked two of the sheets of foolscap paper over the candle. These were signed by all of the people present, who agreed that they were unmarked except for the signatures. This procedure was followed at all of the sittings. One sheet was placed on the floor under a stool, the other was placed on blotting-paper on top of the stool. A light celluloid trumpet, marked with luminous paint, was placed in the middle of the circle.

When the lights were switched on at the conclusion of the sitting, two impressions had been made—one on each sheet of smoked paper. These I immediately fixed. The impression on the sheet of paper on the top of the stool claimed my attention. If this was a thumb-print, why was the second joint — which the blurred impression betrayed—more bulky and fleshy than the top joint? (Exhibit No. 1, p. 316.)

The other impression on the second sheet was a thumb joint with a curious indentation by its apex. (Exhibit No. 2, p. 318.)

*Saturday, February 21, 1931.*

On the following morning I carefully examined the original imprints of the hands of the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, which were taken by me in 1925. I could find no point of resemblance to the séance prints, the origin of which I felt to be extremely doubtful. That evening I again dined at Dorincourt, and at approximately the same time the second séance was held. The same formalities were observed.

At the conclusion of the sitting, on one of the smoked papers was found a clear skin imprint and also a sketchy impression, which one might presume to be the materialized hand of a child. (Exhibit No. 3, p. 324.) This second "thumb" impression confirmed my suspicion of the possibility of fraud; no thumb would ever show such

a clear impression of its second joint; no child's hand would ever show its lines white, they would be black. On the day following I examined these impressions minutely under a glass, and I came to the conclusion that they were not thumb imprints at all.

*Monday, February 23, 1931.*

During the morning I smoked some sheets of white paper, and asked my secretary to make an impression with her right big toe, tilted at an angle of roughly 45 degrees. The result was a similar reproduction to the imprints obtained at the two Valiantine séances.

Unfortunately, the imprints obtained at these two séances were not clear enough to afford definite proof of fraud.

The third sitting held at Dorincourt this evening commenced at 8.50. Mr. Charles Sykes had brought with him a small tin containing "modelling wax," which he had placed on the top of the stool by the side of one of the smoked papers.

At the conclusion of the sitting, when the lights were switched on there appeared, on the top paper, two clear impressions (Exhibit No. 5, p. 332). A clear imprint had also been made on the "wax" (Exhibit No. 7, p. 342) and a fourth impression had been made on the paper underneath the stool (Exhibit No. 6, p. 334). I immediately fixed the papers and then examined the impressions closely; these confirmed my suspicions—they were not thumb-prints.

I waited until the other sitters and the medium had returned to the drawing-room, so leaving me alone with Mr. Bradley. We then arranged that he should tell them that in order to disarm any possible adverse criticism, should these prints prove to be supernormal, it would be as well if all our toe-prints were taken. This he did, and I then prepared some extra sheets of smoked paper. I took my own "toe" impressions first.

George Valiantine was quite willing to give the impression of his toes; in fact he helped himself to a piece of the smoked paper and was preparing to put his toe down on it, when I interrupted him—I noticed that he was going to give a perfectly flat impression. I remarked: "Wait a minute, George, let me steady your toe, I want it like this," and I tilted the toe slightly to the edge. I noticed that Valiantine's big toes could

be moved independently, like a thumb. These imprints I then fixed.

After making a cursory examination of the imprints of Valiantine's left toe, I remarked that there was some similarity between his and the "spirit" impressions. This remark evoked from Valiantine symptoms of alarm; he took the prints from me, and hardly glancing at them, he said:

"I can't see any similarity. They're not at all the same."

Valiantine now undoubtedly knew that we suspected him, for he showed signs of nervousness.

Although it was early in the morning when I reached my flat I again very carefully examined the "supernormal" prints, and compared these with the imprints of George Valiantine's toes. The prints alleged to be supernormal impressions of Lord Dewar proved to be normal impressions of Valiantine's left toe.

The next morning I saw Mr. Bradley at his office in London, taking with me all the impressions that we had obtained. It was essential that Valiantine should not be allowed to become suspicious.

On Wednesday, February 25, Lady Conan Doyle and her son, Adrian, sat with Valiantine at Dorincourt. Mr. Bradley smoked a sheet of paper and placed it in the centre of the circle. Late that night he telephoned me to say that more imprints, but seemingly different ones, had been given. I called at his office the next morning and collected this fixed sheet (Exhibit No. 14, p. 350). No "toe" impressions had been given, but there was one which was discovered later to be the mark of an elbow joint. Mr. Bradley and I discussed our course of action at some length, and we agreed that at the next sitting further proof must be obtained if possible. This sitting was arranged for Friday, February 27.

To conclude the evidence of fraud, I suggested that I be permitted to use a chemical. Mr. Bradley gave me a free hand in the matter. So on the Friday afternoon I prepared a tin of "modelling wax" in a "Craven A" cigarette tin. In this I pressed a pound of plasticine, rolled quite flat and smooth; I then spread a thin coating of finger-print ink on the top; on this I sprinkled some Methylene Green, which is an aniline dye of great penetrative potency. Over the whole I sprinkled French chalk, smoothing it with my fingers to give a smooth,

dry surface. The slightest touch would break the "skin" of French chalk and stain whatever touched its surface. This prepared tin of "wax" I gave to Mr. Charles Sykes.

*Friday, February 27, 1931.*

The papers having been smoked, one sheet was placed on the top of the stool and one underneath. Mr. Sykes produced the tin of "wax" and placed it on the top of the stool. The lights were switched out and the séance began.

The sitting lasted a little over an hour. When the lights were switched on, George Valiantine and the sitters stooped forward to examine the smoked papers; Mr. Bradley gave a caution that they must not be touched until they had been fixed. I immediately fixed the impressions obtained, one of which appeared to be the outer edge of a little finger. Three indentations were marked in the "wax."

After we had examined and discussed these imprints I suggested that I might be permitted to take an impression of Valiantine's *whole* foot. Valiantine readily agreed, and I took two impressions of his feet, including the heels. There were no signs on his feet of Methylene Green. I then left the room and brought in the enlargements of Valiantine's toe-prints and Monday's séance prints. Valiantine started to argue, and I then asked him if he would give me an impression of his little finger.

After I had obtained these impressions we examined them, and I said to Valiantine:

"Can you explain why this 'spirit' finger so closely resembles yours?"

VALIANTINE: That's not my little finger.

N.J.: It looks suspiciously like it.

VALIANTINE (*in anger*): I'll bet you two hundred pounds that is not my little finger.

N.J.: Then probably you have a dummy finger in your pocket?

VALIANTINE (*in greater anger*): Look here, you can search me.

Mr. Bradley then said he thought it was only right that Valiantine should agree to be searched.

I ran through Valiantine's pockets and found nothing of any interest; he then removed his coat and waistcoat. I then examined the left arm, and, on his elbow, there was a large "splodge" of finger-print ink and Methylene Green, staining the skin.

We asked Valiantine for an explanation; he refused to say anything. He attempted to explain the mark on his elbow by saying that the ectoplasm had absorbed the Methylene Green, and in returning to his body had left a deposit of dye on his elbow. I examined his coat sleeve to see if, on its outer surface, there was the stain of the dye, which, if his hypothesis had been correct, there should have been; there were no signs of stain on the external surface of the coat.

### *Deductions and Conclusions*

The use of the finger-print system in connection with crime and its detection, and the system of classification, was perfected by Sir Edward Henry. It has been established that the chance of two finger-prints being identical is one in sixty-four thousand million. It can, therefore, be safely said that the finger-print system is a perfect means of identification.

To establish survival as a definite, scientific fact, it is quite reasonable that attempts should be made by those interested in psychic research to obtain supernormal imprints.

The method of identification by finger-prints is simple. The ridges are counted from a definite given point to a fork or island; the process is repeated as many times as possible until a dozen or more points of similarity are obtained. No two finger-prints are ever exactly alike; the digital members are padded and the angle of contact varies considerably. Added to this there are various skin movements, and such secondary conditions as the dryness or moisture of the skin, the object touched, and the media employed.

In this experiment, the media used were ordinary white papers smoked over an ordinary candle so that a light deposit of carbon particles was obtained. The pressure of a finger on this carbon surface would result in a clear photographic imprint, but owing to the ridges of the skin, in which are mouths of the sweat glands, being the highest points, the ridges would be white and the furrows black.

To make it easier for readers to establish for themselves the similarity of the impressions, some of these imprints have been photographically reversed so that the ridges are now black and the furrows show white. It is

possible even to detect the mouths of the sweat glands in the black lines, which are the ridges.

Toe-prints were given on the Friday, Saturday and Monday, and at all these séances it was observed that George Valiantine wore dancing pumps and ordinary black silk socks. After the imprints of his toes had been taken on Monday, on the following Friday evening, February 27, he wore ordinary lace-up shoes, and he did not attempt to give any further toe imprints.

On Friday, the 20th, the first imprint was later discovered to be a right toe. Owing to the normal impression being blurred it was impossible to obtain sufficient data to establish fraud. On the second imprint obtained at the same séance a peculiar indentation appears on the left side, which destroys what should have been the edge of the apex, rendering identification a matter of some difficulty. This indentation, in my opinion, may have been caused by the pressure of the nail of the index finger on to the apex of the thumb. It is possible that this may have been done with the deliberate intention of obliterating the apex.

On the Saturday evening, one print was obtained (Exhibit No. 3, p. 324), which again appears to be the impression of the right big toe. Owing to movement the imprint is blurred. This is reproduced with an imprint of the normal right toe, taken on the Monday evening. (Exhibit No. 13, p. 346.)

On the same sheet as the "toe-print" (Exhibit No. 3, p. 324) there appears an impression alleged to be the spirit hand of "Honey." Close examination shows this to be merely the outline of a hand. There are no indications of any skin ridges, although lines, presumably the main lines of the hand, are clearly seen. This impression could have been made by a piece of cardboard or some similar substance, cut in the shape of a hand and with the actual lines scored on the cardboard with a sharp knife; this would give the ridged impressions and would account for the blurring at the edge of the hand. No human hand or ectoplasmic impression would give such a sharply defined edge.

On Monday, February 23, four impressions were obtained that convict Valiantine of fraud. Three were on smoked paper, and the fourth was an impression made on "modelling wax" placed in the circle by Mr. Charles Sykes. (Exhibits Nos. 5, 6, 7, pp. 332, 334, 342.) On Wednesday, February 25, the sitters were Lady Conan

Doyle, Mr. H. Dennis Bradley, Mr. Adrian Conan Doyle, Mrs. Bradley, and George Valiantine. A photograph of the entire sheet, as handed to me on the Thursday morning by Mr. Dennis Bradley, is reproduced. (Exhibit No. 14, p. 350.) One impression is obviously an elbow joint; this is reproduced as a microphotograph. (Exhibit No. 19, p. 368.)

On Friday, February 27, final and definite proof of fraud was obtained. Numerous impressions were made on the smoked paper, and further unidentifiable impressions were made on the plasticine impregnated with Methylene Green. Corresponding stains were found, after the séance, on the left elbow of George Valiantine. Elbow impressions were also marked on the smoked paper. A microphotograph of one of them is reproduced, together with an impression made normally on the smoked paper. (Exhibit No. 19, p. 368.)

It is impossible to identify an elbow impression in the same way that a digital impression is identified, but the similarity of the skin's configurations are observable. A further impression obtained was that of a little finger. In the "supernormal" impression there are signs of slight movement. The finger had been stretched to its fullest extent and the top joint first carefully placed on the paper; this resulted in slight movement when the edge of the hand was lowered.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after these discoveries, Mr. Bradley took steps to warn other investigators with whom Valiantine was to have sat. One of these, Mr. X, came to London, and we showed him the microphotographs, together with the original imprints, but he was unconvinced of fraud. His hypothesis was that our suspicious attitude of mind had resulted in the unconscious production of fraud. He then produced an alleged "supernormal" impression which he had received on smoked paper at a séance held at his house previously with George Valiantine. He lent this to me, and I carefully examined the impressions of George Valiantine's hands taken by me seven years ago; and I found that this impression could be identified with that of the middle finger of Valiantine's left hand.

<sup>1</sup> NOTE BY H. D. B.—It was later proved that this impression of a finger was not that of Valiantine's little finger. It was only after a very careful study had been made, at my request, by ex-Chief Inspector W. T. Bell that he discovered certain points of similarity in comparison with one of Valiantine's middle fingers. Mr. Bell states, however, that the data are not sufficient to determine definitely the identity of the two impressions.

## CHAPTER XIII

### EX-CHIEF INSPECTOR W. T. BELL'S REPORT ON THE IMPRINTS

I RECEIVED from Mr. H. Dennis Bradley photographic copies of skin impressions (reproduced here, see Exhibit No. 20, p. 386), with the request that I should pass an opinion as to their identity.

Taking into account the general character of these impressions, and the contour shown by the skin ridge lines, there is little doubt that the imprints are those of the end joint of a digit impressed down to, and including, the flexure of the joint.

These impressions do not reveal the whole of the surface of the digit, but in each case a large portion of the same area is disclosed, which provides sufficient data to allow identity, or non-identity, to be determined.

Ridge characteristics differ in type. They may appear as a ridge bifurcation in an upward or downward direction, a ridge abruptly ending in its course, or disclose a lake formation, etc.

Both the impressions submitted to me are, without doubt, of the same type of pattern, and disclose skin ridge characteristics which agree, not only in type, but also in the sequence in which they appear. In short, the peculiarities shown in one impression are to be found reproduced in the other. Eighteen of these clearly defined ridge characteristics, which are in agreement, are marked in each case by means of lines drawn and numbered.

A brief description of the points enumerated is as follows:

Commencing with Point marked No. 1, it will be seen that the ridge indicated bifurcates in a downward direction at this point.

Point No. 2 shows a ridge ending in an upward direction, and, counting in a direct line, is the eighth ridge from Point No. 1.

Point No. 3 will be observed to be a ridge ending in a downward direction there being but one ridge intervening between this point and Point No. 2.

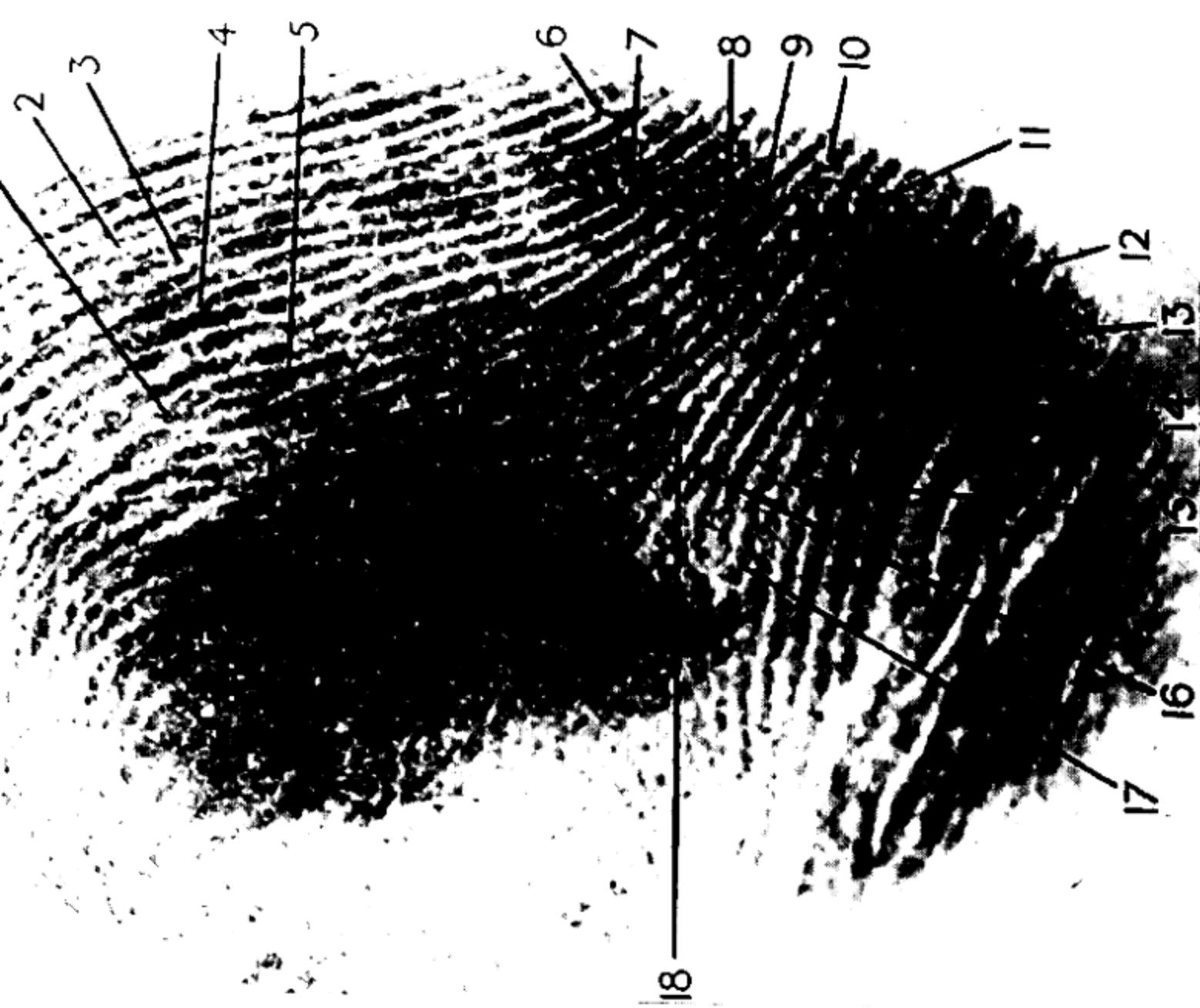
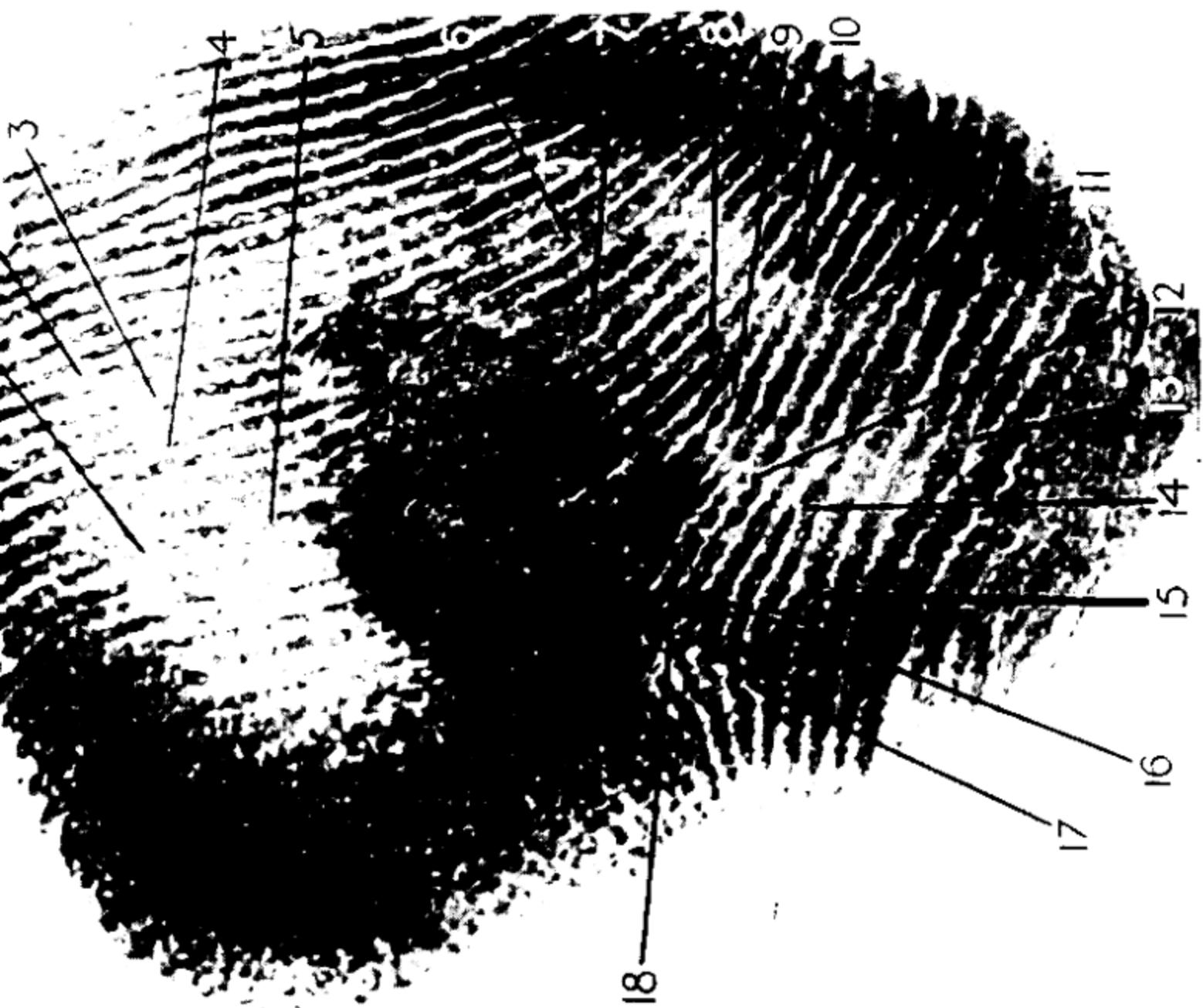
**Exhibit No. 20**

The left photograph is an enlargement of the super-normal impression of one of the alleged Lord Dewar imprints, obtained on February 23, 1931, at a séance held at Dorincourt, under the mediumship of George Valiantine.

The right photograph is an enlargement of one of the normal impressions of Valiantine's left toe.

These photographs have been reversed so that the ridges show more clearly as thick black lines. The eighteen points of similarity in the two impressions have been marked by Mr. W. T. Bell, ex-Chief Inspector in Charge, the Finger-print Bureau, New Scotland Yard, who states that these impressions are identical, and are therefore imprints of the same digit of the same person.

Exhibit No. 20



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Point No. 4 is a ridge ending abruptly in an upward direction, and is the third ridge from Point No. 3.

Point No. 5 is a ridge bifurcating in an upward direction. It forms a junction with the same ridge again at Point No. 1. A long lake formation is the result between these two points.

Point No. 6 is a ridge ending in a downward direction, and if the next ridge to the right be traced in an upward direction it will be found to end abruptly at Point No. 2.

Point No. 7 is a ridge forking in an upward direction, and is the third ridge from Point No. 6.

Point No. 8 is a bifurcation upwards, and is the fourth ridge from Point No. 7.

Point No. 9 is a ridge ending downwards, and is the second ridge from Point No. 8.

Point No. 10 is a ridge forking upwards, the limbs of the fork passing to the right and left of ridge No. 9.

Point No. 11 is a ridge ending in an upward direction and is the second from Point No. 10. Follow the ridge immediately below Point No. 11 towards the left, and it will be found to fork towards the centre of the impressions at the Point marked No. 12.

Point No. 13 is a ridge ending towards the left, and is the sixth ridge from Point No. 12.

Point No. 14 is a bifurcation to the left, with one ridge intervening between this Point and Point No. 12.

Point No. 15 is a ridge ending to the right, and is the second ridge from Point No. 14.

Point No. 16 is a ridge bifurcating to the left, and is the fourth ridge from Point No. 15.

Point No. 17 shows a ridge ending to the left, and is the second ridge below Point No. 16.

Point No. 18 is a ridge ending in a downward direction, and is the third ridge from Point No. 16. A striking triangular formation at Point No. 16 will be noticed if traced from this Point towards the left.

The ridge characteristics disclosed by these two imprints—if checked and cross-checked together—will be found to be in absolute agreement.

After having been engaged for many years continuously and solely on finger-print work, I can only say that I have never found or known such a coincident sequence of ridge characteristic data to exist in any two digital impressions, unless the imprints were those of the same digit. Therefore I do not hesitate to say that these

impressions are identical, and are those of the same digit of one and the same person.

With regard to this matter, I wish it to be understood that my attitude is that of a finger-print expert only.

The imprint produced on the left of the exhibit (see Exhibit No. 21 on opposite page) is partly blurred, and, judging by the contour of the ridge lines, is of a finger impressed on its right side when looked at from the back.

This reveals a limited area only, and, consequently, few skin ridge characteristics are available for purposes of comparison, or contrast, with any digital impression.

I have, however, marked the clearly defined ridge characteristics disclosed in this imprint, together with an exact sequence of similar characteristics shown in the right hand side of the complete impression reproduced on the right of the exhibit.

Such scanty data do not, of course, determine definitely the identity of any two impressions.

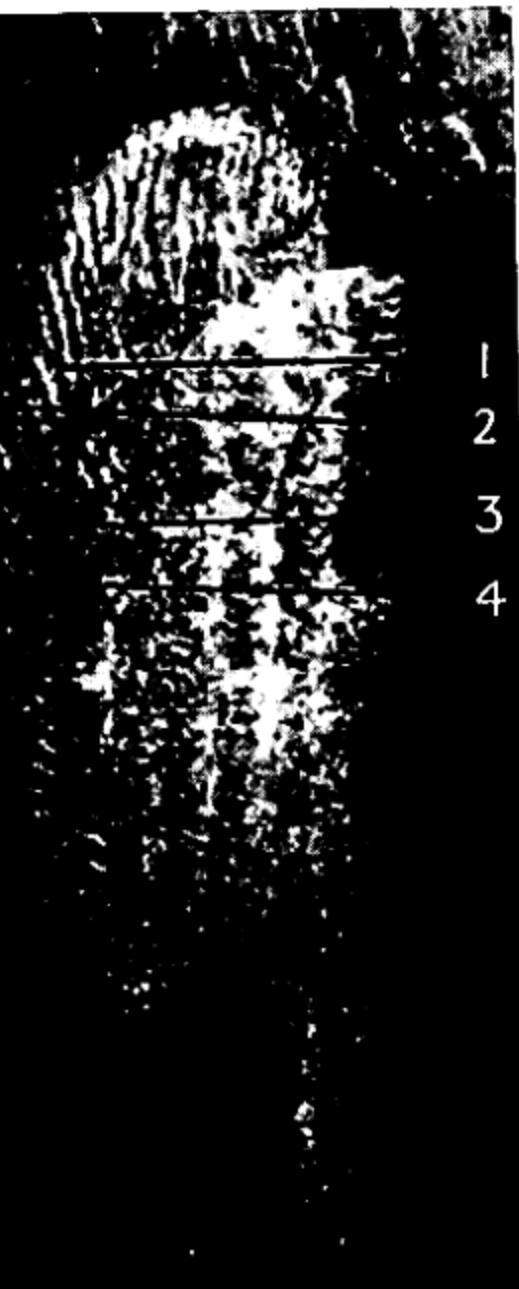
Seeing, however, that nothing of a dissimilar character appears in the area comparable, some suspicion exists in my mind that these impressions are of the same finger.

This suspicion becomes much stronger when it is understood that only a few persons were present when the imprint was obtained.

(Signed) W. T. BELL.

*Ex-Chief Inspector in Charge,  
Finger-Print Bureau,  
New Scotland Yard.*

1.



2.



EXHIBIT NO. 21.

1. Enlargement of end joint of the finger print alleged to be that of the late Sir Henry Segrave, obtained on the smoked paper at the séance held at Dorincourt on Friday, February 27th, 1931.
2. Enlargement of end joint of the right middle finger of George Valantine.  
The points of similarity are marked by ex-Chief Inspector W. T. Bell.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### THE LAST CHAPTER

*The rise and fall of Valiantine—Materialism and decay—Flattery and money—Heights and depths—Spiritualism and its problems—The study of psychics—The herd—The so-called "Societies"—The "half and halfers"—Propagandists and demagogues—Spiritualism as a religion—A farce—Evidences of survival—The futility of the Societies—The Spiritualist Churches—Banalities and platitudes—A deep problem—My advice—The dangers of the study—Spirit communication is not a religion—The established Churches—Their attitude—The evils of mediumship—The mental strain—The Catholic Church and its attitude—The Church of England—The Jewish faith—Sporadic phenomena are not the worship of God—Psychical research a science for the few—Shades of good and evil—Conclusions—The most difficult word for man to write.*

THE rise and fall of Valiantine presents an intriguing psychological study.

The records of his phenomenal mediumship prove that at the time he was at the height of his powers he could be accounted as the most remarkable physical medium in history. Later, when his mentality developed a materialistic outlook, decay set in. His reason for attempting these imprint frauds will remain incomprehensible. He was receiving no money from me, and for him to imagine that in the presence of imprint experts he could commit palpable fraud and escape detection was a sign of sheer lunacy. With the actual personal imprints of famous men in our possession, only a madman would offer his big toe for comparison. Yet Valiantine, despite his illiteracy, is by no means a stupid man.

Powerful objective mediums, such as Valiantine, possess a strain of abnormality. From my observation of him, from the first moment of his last—and final—visit, it was certainly apparent that he had developed a form of megalomania. Flattery, adulation, and the gifts of large sums of money had led him to imagine himself a man of super importance. Since adopting professional mediumship Valiantine became unquestionably the

highest paid living medium. In these hard times there are few men who can command the sum of four or five hundred pounds a week for their services. Considering the marvellous accumulation of *subjective* phenomena—i.e., incontrovertible mental evidence given in the “direct voice” on matters completely outside his knowledge—it remains an enigma that he should have attempted such palpable and stupid *objective* fraud. No man in his right senses would destroy a brilliant reputation by imbecile and meaningless acts, with the distinct possibility—even probability—of a ruinous discovery.

The fact of Valiantine’s fraudulently produced toe-print cannot negative or explain the fact that, under the mediumship of this imperfectly educated and semi-illiterate American provincial, Archaic Chinese was spoken by the “voice” of “K’ung-fu-T’zu” on several occasions, during which this “voice” discussed abstruse problems in Chinese literature. Here again is an example of the heights and depths.

In my intensive study of psychical research, and my observations of the cult of spiritualism, I have discovered that there are deeper problems to be considered than those which are outwardly apparent.

I have been careful to record meticulously the facts of my experiences, irrespective of their tendencies towards good or bad. The deeper problem is one which I have weighed and considered during the last few years. Taken scientifically, psychical research represents an absorbing study. In its present state, it is a subject which should be studied only by those who possess a sound knowledge of its various intricacies. That supernormal phenomena do occur, and that genuine communication with “spirit entities” is, in certain cases, possible and practicable, has, in my opinion, been definitely and scientifically proved.

As a result of these proofs, a vast multitude, totalling millions, in all parts of the world, have branded themselves as “spiritualists,” and, with the herd instinct, many sections have sought to found a new religion. There exist also, in practically every country, certain sections which label themselves “psychical researchers.” These sections consider themselves superior in intelligence to the spiritualists; and the spiritualists consider themselves, often by reason only of some alleged communication from “Black Eagle,” or “Pink Feathers,” as

infinitely more ethereal than mere mundane-minded researchers.

As an impartial student, I have had ample opportunities of observing both sections. As for the so-called Societies for Psychical Research, I have found that no research whatever is made by them, but that their activities are chiefly devoted to bitter and prejudiced attacks upon all forms of supernormal phenomena, which they happen to find inexplicable.

So far as the English S.P.R. is concerned, it would certainly appear only logical and dignified for it to cease to pretend to function, since its present officials deny all existence of supernormal phenomena. From its own publications it is obvious that its *raison d'être* is at an end. The jaundiced attitude exhibited towards the carefully compiled work of scientists might be regarded as vicious, were it not discounted by fanaticism. Strangely enough, many of these antagonistic types are so peculiarly constituted that they hang on to the subject, just as a jealous lover will hang on to a mistress for the perverse pleasure of tormenting her. They hang on viciously, in the hope of gaining an opportunity to injure or destroy. Any such opportunity for harm provides them with a sadistic mental emotion.

There is also a very considerable section of "half and halfers." This section forms itself into further Societies, and endeavours to obtain the respect of the populace by adopting high-sounding titles, such as the "International Laboratory of So-and-So"—or the "British Empire Institution of This and That." Such societies, whilst posing as scientific, flirt with the spiritualistic sections, and are thus enabled to attract more members to their Associations. And when one studies the faces of the ordinary members of these so-called Psychical Research Societies, one observes the unattractive signs of their obsession. Their worried expressions are, if anything, more disturbing than the vacuous stupidity of the simple-minded, enthusiastic, and credulous spiritualists.

Spiritualistic societies, during the last decade, have sprung up all over England, and all over the world. International Unions are being formed by propagandists, and vulgar demagogues, seizing their opportunities, are surging forward to lead the mob.

My experience during the last eight years of my studies of the various forms of mediumship in many hundreds of

séances, in addition to the development of my own personal "direct voice" mediumship, qualifies me to judge and express a considered opinion upon values and upon tendencies.

Spiritualism is now being foisted on the public as a new religion. I assert deliberately that, as a religion, it is a farce. Tinpot little churches are being erected all over the country; irresponsible spiritualistic tub-thumpers are appointing themselves as preachers of a new gospel; dud clairvoyants are giving banal exhibitions at their church services under the blasphemous guise of spirituality. Boring and ill-written hymns are sung; hypocritical prayers are intoned by vulgar and crafty mediums; and the name of God is dragged into abysmal mud.

Bemused enthusiasts proclaim that because "White Feathers," speaking through the mouth of some alleged medium—in Lancashire accents and pidgin-English—has announced to the world that reincarnation is a fact, we must all at once prepare ourselves to be reincarnated. Obsession becomes so fixed that every word spoken by an alleged spirit communicant is accepted as fundamental and omnipotent truth. "White Feathers," having lived his life as a Red Indian on the prairies, is, of course, qualified to know; even though, being a particularly "happy" soul, he has not yet decided when to make his second appearance in the flesh on earth.

Reincarnation, says "White Feathers," is necessary for man's development. "Every time, in every way, man gets betterer and betterer."

It would be dull to reiterate "White Feathers'" or "Black Tomahawk's" solemn pronouncements, but "reincarnation" is accepted as a belief by very considerable sections of the credulous. It has no scientific or logical foundation. There exist certain evidences of man's survival as a "spirit entity" in some other sphere, the proofs of which are the retention of his memory. But no evidence has ever been produced of *anyone* existing on earth who has been able to prove that he remembers his previous existence. The argument that man arrives at perfection by innumerable reincarnations on earth is singularly inept to-day. One scans the horizon in vain for some signs of these supermen.

I have stated earlier in this book that I have resigned my membership of the various Research and Spiritualistic Societies to which I belonged. The reason for my

resignation was that these Societies suppress the truth. Personally I see no need for any of them. They exist only to keep a few officials, or as institutes to which wealthy spinsters may leave bequests. The majority of the Spiritualist Churches all over England are perpetually begging for money. I receive hundreds of letters asking me for contributions. I have found the same thing with the London Societies—the eternal begging for funds. When I say that from no Psychical Research Society nor from any Spiritualistic Society have I ever gained one solitary suggestion of value in my studies one may realize the extent of their futility.

As for the Spiritualist Churches, their services may offer some appeal to the illiterate mind, but as a form of worship I regard them as deplorable and subversive. Their ritual is on a low plane, and is uninspired and ignorant. The platitudinous banalities of their preachers, so often tinged with the suggestion of pseudo-mysticism, are repulsive to any developed intelligence.

The theory of man's survival was accepted long before the fact was ascertained. Survival is the fundamental basis of all the finely evolved religions that have existed for centuries. An intuitive acceptance of faith is more refined than a tardy recognition of fact. Those who are attempting to form a new religion of "Spiritualism" should realize that naked facts—unclothed by sound philosophy—can be extremely vulgar.

I have stated that in the study of "spirit communication" a deep problem is involved. From the thousands of letters I have received I am fully aware of the tremendous desire which exists in the minds of most human beings to communicate again with those whom they have lost. With considerable patience and perseverance such communication, in some cases, can be achieved. When such proof has been established to the satisfaction of the ordinary man and woman, I would then advise them to leave all experiments with professional mediums severely alone; if they wish to continue their psychic studies they should do so privately, and in the sanctuary of their own homes. In my own research I have been fortunate enough to achieve the purpose upon which I set out. I have proved, with considerable toil, to my own satisfaction, that man survives bodily death. So I believe can this fact be proved by any scientist who is prepared to sacrifice the time, and endure the pains of the labour involved.

So far as the promiscuous study of this vast subject is concerned, and the important question as to whether it is advisable for the majority of those who are compelled to provide for and live their lives on earth to enter upon it, my answer must be reserved. It depends entirely upon the individual. In "direct" voice communication, when one is in contact with intelligent and personally known entities, conversations can be held which are beautiful and inspiring, but it must be realized that when once the channels of communication are opened, lower and less intelligent entities are also, at times, afforded opportunities. *It is because of this danger that if I were asked: "Is the tendency of 'spiritualism' in its present public form towards good or evil?" I would reply that it is so often misused and abused, that the general tendency is towards evil.*

"Spirit communication" is not a religion; it is a scientific discovery which is in the stages of infancy.

The searcher after knowledge must inevitably meet with set-backs, accidents, and handicaps. The fraudulent actions of certain professional mediums no more affect the value of the science itself than the fraudulent action of a banker affects the practice of banking. But fraud and imposture, when practised under the cloak of religion, become blasphemy.

The established religions have been founded and built upon a fine and cultured philosophy. So far as this country is concerned, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church are based upon a solid foundation, and their services are conducted with dignity and reverence. Throughout the many years of my psychic studies my attitude towards the Spiritualist Churches has remained unchanged. The conclusions expressed in my previous psychic books regarding the religious aspect remain unaltered. I was educated a Roman Catholic and I remain a Roman Catholic.

The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards spiritualism is antagonistic. She has been wise enough not to deny that communication with spirits is possible, but she has discounted and discouraged it by the contention that only evil spirits communicate with human beings. Although this broad contention is incorrect, as I have proved by personal communication with many individual spirits, yet, at the same time, it is unquestionable that in the lower grades of mediumship there are innumerable evil, lying, and impersonating entities seek-

ing channels of communication, with the result that many séances which are held are of a degrading character, and in such cases the practice is unhealthy and morbid.

It has also to be considered that even when brilliant phenomena take place, they evolve a great mental strain, and a dominating aftermath of mental occupation, which can only be borne by the strongest of minds.

For nearly two thousand years, despite her rigid autocracy, the Roman Catholic Church has furthered an artistic culture which survives. Her very sensuality is creative, and makes a wondrous appeal. Beethoven, Weber, Haydn, Mozart, Gounod, and other great composers have given to the Church the divine inspiration of their music, just as many of the world's greatest painters and sculptors have paid tribute with their art. Gorgeous vestments and jewelled caskets are made to adorn the interior of wonderful cathedrals and stately chapels. To seek to replace such artistry and beauties by banal services conducted by ignorant and illiterate mediums and preachers, with confused ideas and a smattering of knowledge, is absurd.

I am on intimate terms with several of the leaders of the Catholic Church and the Church of England. They have discussed my psychical studies with me at considerable length. An international institution, such as the Roman Catholic Church, moves warily, and considers very carefully the forms of government by which the unintelligent mass may be led.

There are at present very few mediums of any value in England, but there are innumerable undeveloped mediums of a low order, through whom spirit entities of a similar low order may endeavour to communicate. Like attracts like. There are deceptions and vulgarities among these entities just as there are among the many living beings whom we meet in life. It is only logical to assume that relative good and evil exist in all the many spheres of existence beyond the planet upon which we are now living. Therefore, I am in accord with the wisdom of the Roman Catholic Church in not encouraging indiscriminate psychic experiments, until such times as the means of communication are more fully developed, and the value and integrity of the communications are more critically analysed.

I am neither insular nor bigoted. As I respect the dignity of the Catholic faith, so do I respect the dignity of the Church of England, and the dignity of the Jewish

faith, the solid foundations of which have withstood the tests of time. But I have no respect for the spiritualistic so-called Churches, based on a mushroom foundation of sporadic phenomena. Such phenomena, whether true or false, are not the worship of God, and do not supply the place of any serious religion or historic creed.

Psychical research is a science, the study of which, in its present stages, should be undertaken only by the few. It is a science in which there are many pitfalls, and, at times, considerable danger. Dangers exist, both physical and mental, which are imperfectly understood.

Spiritualism, as a modern belief, has attracted the imagination of millions of people of all nationalities. It has become a "cult." That supernormal phenomena do exist is unquestionable. That the cult of Spiritualism is widely contaminated by fraud is also unquestionable. The scientific researcher must impartially appraise the value of all that is genuine, and rigidly discard all that is false. He must be coldly impersonal in the knowledge that falsity pulsates with truth. He must be a physicist and a psychologist. He must realize that, whilst falsity may often lead to the discovery of truth, so also will truth be the means by which falsity is unmasksed.

In psychics, the great unscientifically-minded mass, who have made a few trifling and indiscriminate experiments, expose themselves to the dangers of obsession. This engenders a narrow perspective, and is liable to have a detrimental effect upon the healthy living of life.

The condition of the world to-day, politically, economically, socially, and morally, does not exhibit encouraging signs of man's progress. Our so-called civilization is still barbaric. Only a glimmer of intelligence is to be observed here and there, and the majority of those inhabiting this speck of a planet have still to learn the alphabet of the Universe. Our conceptions are limited, and the processes of evolution are slow.

The psychologist seeks to discover the purpose of life, and the possibility of an after-life.

My faith in man's survival is now immutable.  
That faith has been confirmed by knowledge.

In the course of the acquisition of knowledge I have become familiar with the contrasting—and sometimes intermingling—shades of good and evil.

All creation pulsates and alternates in the throes of good and evil.

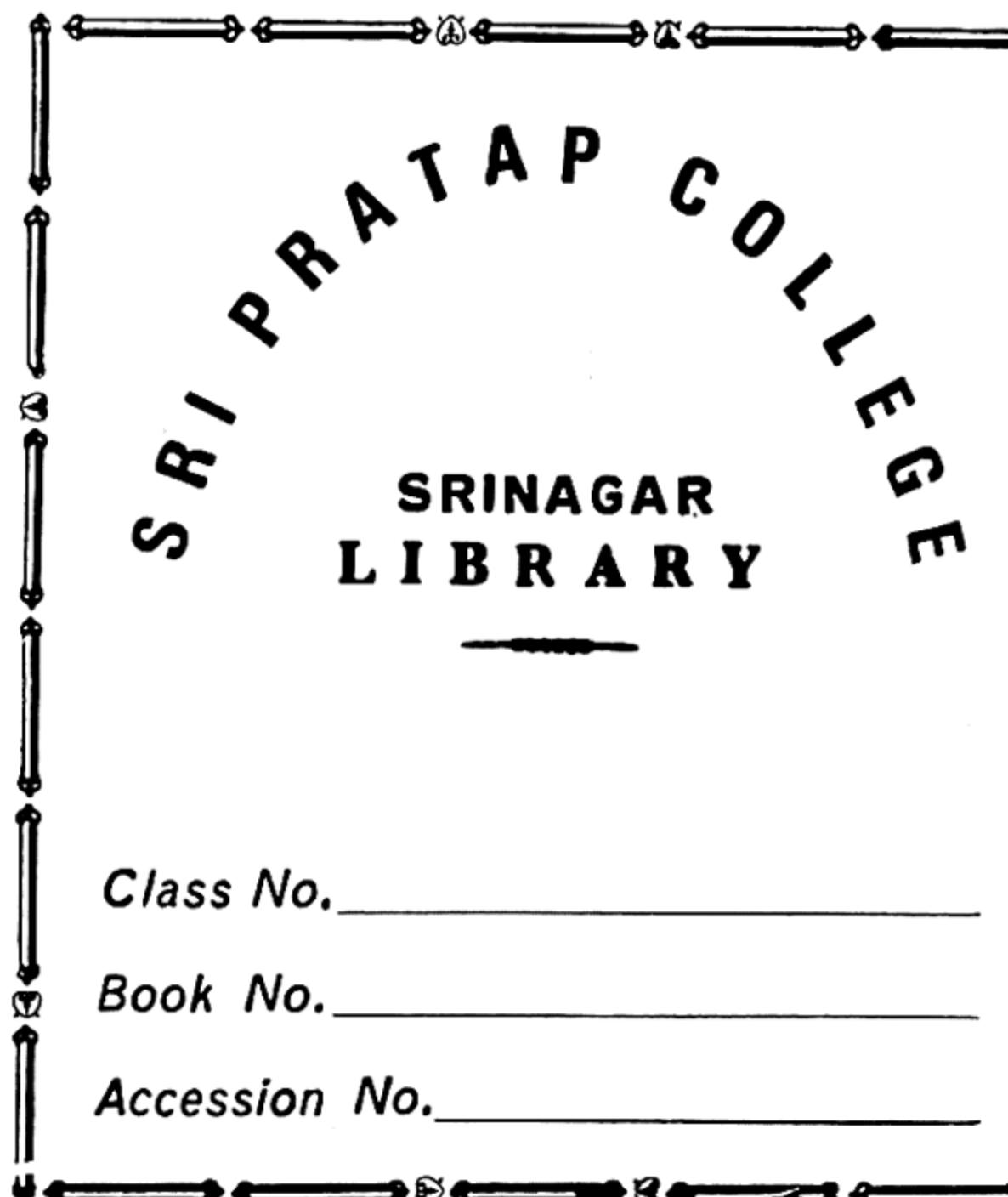
All that I have attempted in these pages is to present

with justice, sincerity, and truth, a summary of my psychic studies.

It remains for those who read to draw their own conclusions.

They may then discover that the most difficult word for man to write is

**FINIS**



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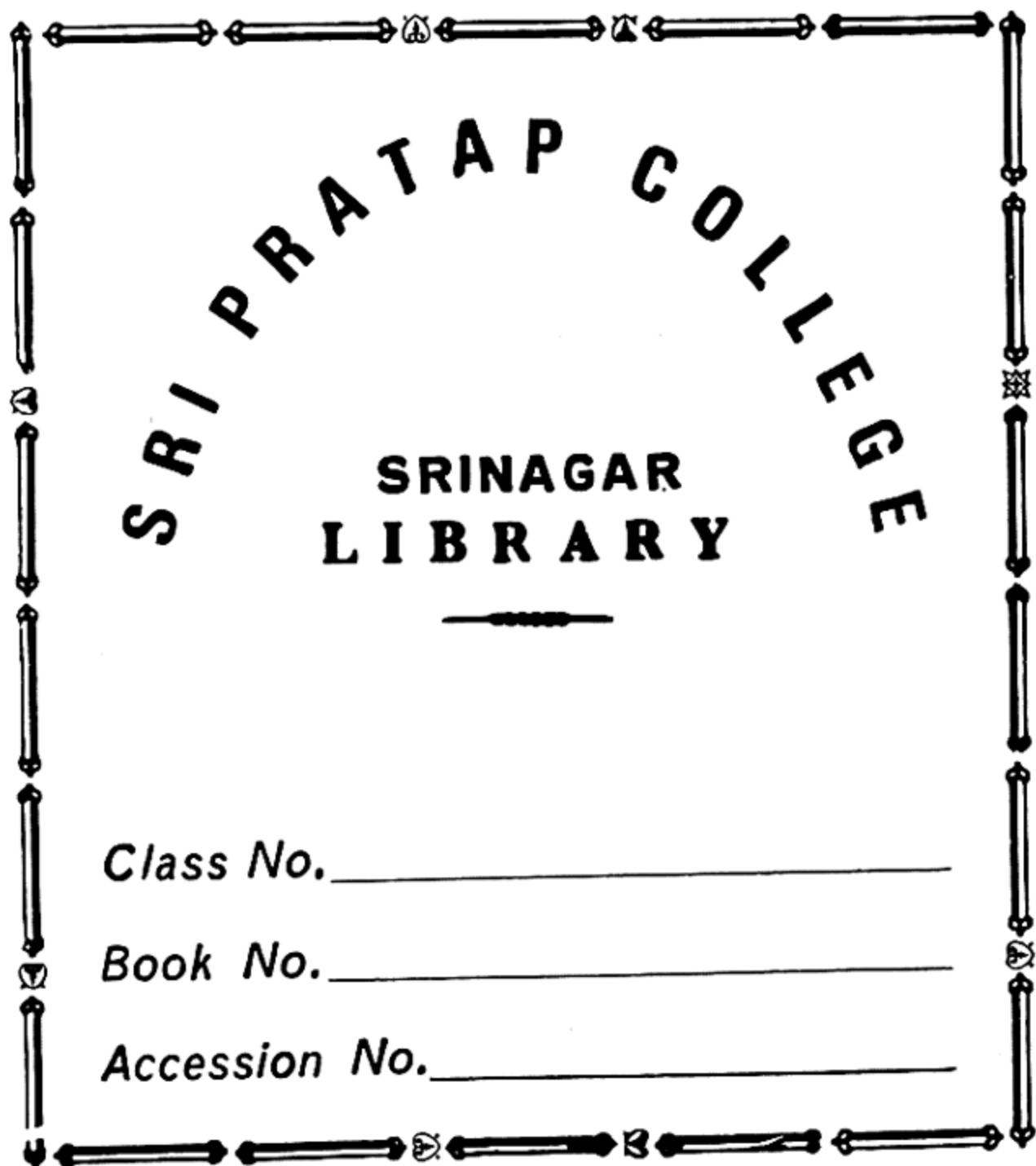
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